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*Edward Thring, headmaster  
of Uppingham school*

George Robert Parkin

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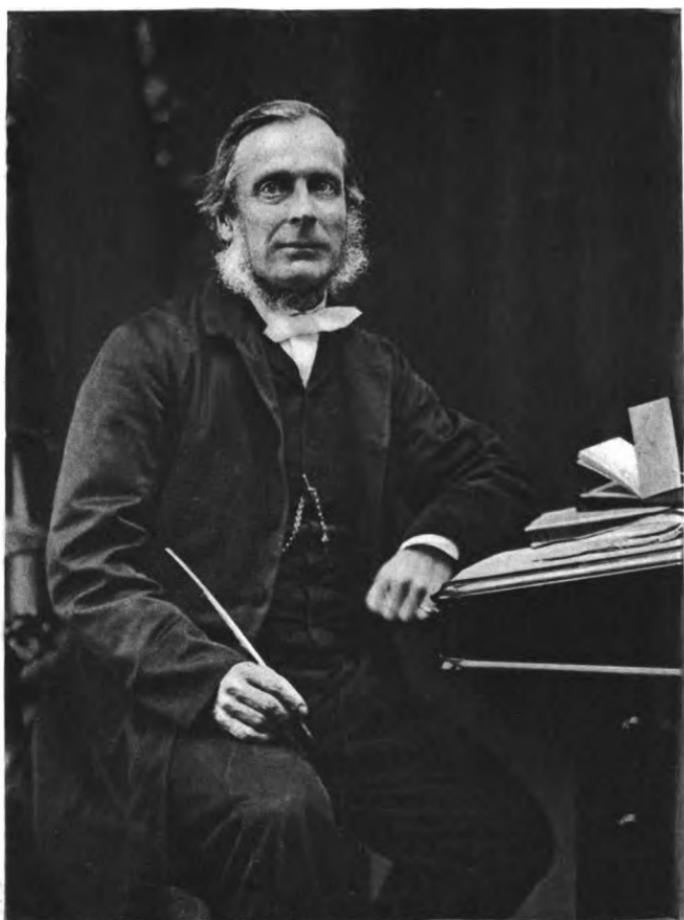




# **LIFE OF EDWARD THRING**







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*Edward Bunting*

# EDWARD THRING

HEADMASTER OF UPPINGHAM SCHOOL

LIFE

DIARY AND LETTERS

BY

GEORGE R. PARKER, C.M.

MAJOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, A.W.

COLLEGE OF UPPINGHAM, A.Q.C.

LEADER

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HEADMASTER OF UPPINGHAM SCHOOL

## LIFE DIARY AND LETTERS

BY

GEORGE R. PARKIN, C.M.G.

M.A., HON. LL.D. UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK  
PRINCIPAL OF UPPER CANADA COLLEGE

London

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THIS RECORD  
OF A STRENUOUS LIFE  
SPENT IN THE PURSUIT OF EDUCATIONAL TRUTH  
I DEDICATE TO  
MY FELLOW TEACHERS  
THROUGHOUT THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD

92444



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN preparing the material for a cheaper issue of this book it has been found necessary to omit a good deal that was contained in the first edition. The omissions consist chiefly of details of school life and portions of correspondence originally inserted because they had special interest for readers personally associated with Uppingham. In making excisions I have aimed at retaining all that was essential to the illustration of Thring's educational ideas. Some rearrangement of the material has also seemed advisable. In other respects the changes have been very slight, and I trust that in this more compact form the book may have the same kindly reception which has been given to the larger edition, and may prove helpful to a widely extended circle of readers.

G. R. P.

TORONTO, *November 1899.*



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

EDWARD THRING was unquestionably the most original and striking figure in the schoolmaster world of his time in England. During the last few years of his life he had come to fill a larger place in the public eye than any other English teacher. Abroad he was the only English schoolmaster of the present generation widely and popularly known by name.

“Thrинг is my ideal of the hero as a schoolmaster,” was said to me by the head of the educational system of one of the Australasian colonies. The same thought, variously expressed, has come from many parts, near and remote, of the lands in which our English tongue is spoken. It is reverently cherished by great numbers of pupils who came under his immediate influence; by fellow teachers, men and women, who had learned to look upon him as a master and leader; and by many others who had fallen under the spell of his strangely stimulating and inspiring personality.

To this view there was an opposing note.

"I will have nothing to do with making a hero of Thrинг," was the remark made by the head of another great English school, when asked to join in a teachers' memorial to the headmaster of Uppingham. There is reason to think that the words embodied the feelings of a group, small perhaps, but not uninfluential, among his English contemporaries.

To those who knew the man well this conflict of opinion seems most natural. There were types of mind and tendencies of thought constitutionally and instinctively repellent to Thrинг; in contact with them he withdrew coldly into himself. It may well be that the repulsion was mutual.

Besides this, his defiance of tradition, his equally resolute opposition to many modern tendencies of educational thought and work, his criticism of systems strongly intrenched and widely accepted, his undisguised contempt for what he thought false glory in schools, ensured antagonism as well as devoted following.

Between these opposing views I have no intention as a biographer, to attempt to decide. Nor would Thrинг have wished me to do so. "Let no one write Latin humbug, or English either, over my bones. No word of praise or blame, if they love me." These are his own words which confront me as I try to link together the story of his life. I take them to mean that he preferred to trust his reputation to the state-

ment of fact rather than to the advocacy of friendship or personal loyalty.

He certainly thought that he had a mission in the world ; that he had important educational truth to work out in concrete form, and to impress upon the mind of his generation. This belief he never concealed ; he stated it as opportunity offered in speech and writing ; through a long teaching life he strove to crystallise it in outward form and fact. Yet he looked upon himself chiefly as a sower of seed ; that this seed of truth in schools should take root, grow, and fructify would have seemed to him of much more account than the settlement of any claim to heroic memory.

In using the material at my disposal for this biography I have kept in mind chiefly two classes of readers. The first consists of those who wish to extract from the records of a teacher's life the thought, experience, or principles which may be of practical use or suggestive value in their educational work ; the other, that large class of pupils, parents, fellow teachers, and friends who, through reverence for the man himself or interest in the school which he built up, will value even slight details which throw light upon his mind and character, and upon the history of Uppingham. It has been with this latter class in view that I have made liberal use of the diary which Thring kept during many years of his life.

An effort has been made to arrange the matter so that the portions of professional or general interest may be read advantageously apart from those which consist chiefly of personal or school details.

With the feeling that readers of this biography would wish to know what Thring was rather than what I thought of him, my plan has been to allow him, as far as possible, to speak for himself. The material for doing this has been for some periods very slight—for others so abundant that the chief difficulty has consisted in selection and arrangement. The one object I have kept in view in making my selections has been to elucidate the great principles on which his work was based.

In a few solemn lines written a few weeks before his death, but when he was still strong and had apparently many years of active work before him, Thring said to me that if ever anything had to be written about Uppingham and his work there, he would like me to do it. At the time when his unlooked-for death compelled a decision, circumstances made it exceedingly difficult for me to undertake the task; the terms of his request made it still more difficult to refuse if any record of his life drawn from his own papers was to be preserved. For the delay which has taken place in the completion of a task assumed under such conditions I have no apology to offer. The pressure of

other and imperative duties has made it necessary to do the work at intervals during years filled with strenuous occupations in many parts of the world.

For the steadfast trust reposed in me by those most closely connected with him, and therefore most interested in the completion of this work, my grateful thanks are due.

No one can be more conscious of the imperfections of this record than myself. But if it helps in some slight degree to scatter more widely the seeds of that educational truth for which Edward Thring sacrificed and suffered so much, it will not have been written in vain.

G. R. P.

UPPER CANADA COLLEGE, TORONTO.



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*Memorial Statue of Edward Thring  
by Thomas Brock, R.A., at Uppingham*



## CHAPTER I

### CHILDHOOD AND EARLY SCHOOL LIFE

1821-1832

EDWARD THRING was born at Alford, in Somersetshire, on 29th November 1821. His father, John Gale Dalton Thring, was rector and sole landed proprietor of the parish of Alford. He married, in 1811, Sarah, daughter of the Rev. John Jenkyns, vicar of the neighbouring parish of Evercreech, and prebendary of Wells. Seven children, of whom Edward was the fifth, were the surviving offspring of this marriage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theresa, born 1815, married Rev. A. O. Fitzgerald, Archdeacon of Wells; died 1867.

Theodore, born 1816 (Eton and Cambridge), Registrar of Bankruptcy Court, Liverpool, 1862; judge in same, 1866; succeeded to his father's estate, 1874; died 1891.

Henry, Lord Thring, born 1818 (Shrewsbury and Cambridge), parliamentary counsel, 1869-86; K.C.B., 1873; created Baron Thring of Alderhurst, 1886.

Elizabeth, born 1819, died 1859.

Edward, the subject of this memoir, born 1821 (Eton and Cambridge), died 1887.

Godfrey, born 1823 (Shrewsbury and Balliol College, Oxford); Rector of Alford with Hornblotton; Prebendary of Wells; compiler of *Church of England Hymn Book*, and author of many well-known hymns.

John Charles, born 1824 (Shrewsbury and Cambridge); curate of Alford, 1855; assistant master Uppingham School, 1858-68; the Chantry, Bradford-on-Avon.

B

The Manor of Alford is on the lists of Domesday Book, in which special mention is made of a mill, the foundations of which are still visible in the bed of the small River Brue which flows through the parish. The country around abounds in places of historic interest. The fosse road which runs along the Alford estate was the great highway in Roman times from Exeter to Ilchester and Bath, and must have echoed to the tramp of many a Roman legion. A few miles off is Cadbury Castle, with its wonderful triple ring of trench and earthworks ; its traditions of Arthur and Camelot ; its certainties of British and Roman occupation. On another side are Wells and Glastonbury, with their almost unique architectural and ecclesiastical history. In later life the rich historic surroundings of his old Somersetshire home stirred Thring deeply, and no doubt had their influence in stimulating his youthful imagination.

The Old Manor House in which he was born, commonly known in the family as "The Cottage," has now disappeared. It was close beside the ancient village church, and was occupied by his father as the rectory until 1830, when, on the death of the grandfather, he removed to the family mansion, Alford House, a short distance off. Here Thring and his brothers and sisters grew up under the mingled influences of what was at once an affluent English country-house and a strictly-managed English rectory. Somerset is a hunting county, and the father's tastes made them familiar with horses and dogs. The rabbit warrens and pheasant coverts, which furnished shooting in their season ; the Brue, where they fished, or bathed, or learned to manage the coracles, which are still reproduced in Somersetshire from the old British models ; the fine

bit of park with its noble trees, its shrubberies, and rookeries ; the woods and fields and lanes of the estate ;—all these gave ample room for the healthy outdoor life of the country. Here he imbibed that almost passionate love of nature, animate and inanimate, the intense interest in birds and beasts and plants which characterised him throughout life, and entered so much into his thought and teaching.

To Alford he always remained deeply attached. Writing to his mother in 1880 he says : " You cannot think how my feelings are bound up in much of Alford —so much so that I never allow myself to dwell on or call vividly to mind the dream that was not a dream of those old days. I could not bear it here with the incessant battle of life."

The village contained only a small farming population, and as country houses and rectories are not very close together in rural Somerset, in the life at Alford there was something of that isolation which not unfrequently makes for individuality of character in those brought up subject to its influences. But as the five brothers of the family were not widely separated in age, there was within the home itself abundant material for a cheerful boy life.

Other companionship was not entirely wanting. The most intimate holiday playmates of the boys were their cousins of the Hobhouse family, whose seat, Hadspen, is but a few miles distant from Alford. These cousins were also to win distinction for themselves in various walks of life. They included the present Lord Hobhouse, of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ; Bishop Hobhouse, formerly of the diocese of Nelson, New Zealand ; and the late Archdeacon Hobhouse, of Bodmin, in the diocese of Cornwall.

The relations between the two families seem to have been particularly affectionate and intimate. One of the Hadspen family remarks in a note: "I have always reckoned on all Thrings as steadily as brothers, and I never found them fail yet." In Edward Thrings Diary for 1862 he says: "Looking over the obituary in the *Times* this morning, I came suddenly on the death of my dear cousin, Henry Hobhouse. A letter from my mother this afternoon told me of his very sudden and quiet end. It is a great blow, breaking up Hadspen again, where all our childhood's feelings were so familiar, and all our ideas so intertwined with the Hobhouses, our nearest relations almost." The companionship of two such groups of boys must have had a healthy and stimulating influence on both.

In holiday times the Hadspen boys came regularly twice a week to bathe at Alford, where the deep pools gave great opportunities for acquiring skill, especially in the art of taking headers. "There must have been something singularly inspiring in the waters of the Brue," writes one of the lads in later life to another, when exchanging congratulations on some new distinction gained.

It is, however, to his parents that we must look for the most powerful of the early influences which moulded Thrings character. But the respective influences of father and mother were in strong contrast. It was said by a keen and competent observer of men who knew John Gale Thrings intimately, that he applied to the small details of family and parish government abilities which might have made him a great statesman or a great general. His own early desire had been to enter the army, but he took orders in deference to the strong wish of his mother. The duties thus assumed were

not, perhaps, entirely congenial to him, but they were discharged with conscientious care and fidelity.

The parish was small, however, and the work light, leaving time for other things. He was a magistrate for the county as well as rector of the parish. He managed his own considerable estate. He had the fondness of English country gentlemen for outdoor life, and was known as the best and boldest rider in the county of Somerset.

Winchester School, where he received his early training, and St. John's College, Cambridge, where he was at the head of one "side" when Lord Palmerston was at the head of the other, had made him a sound and polished scholar. His two elder sons received from him the whole of their preliminary training for Eton and Shrewsbury respectively. The Eton tutors of his boys, as school letters show, consulted him with deference on questions of classical teaching.

If his teaching was sound his rule was rigid. He was a man of strong and unbending will, and none had better reason to know this than his own family. His domestic government was not merely strict—it was autocratic and exacting. To the children who left home the wish to escape from paternal authority was, it may be suspected, a strong impulse to vigorous exertion in making for themselves an independent place in the world. The children who remained at home knew little relaxation of this authority even when they were much beyond the period of youth. "The fact that the Thrings as boys and young men did not revolt against their father's arbitrary interference with the details of their daily life always seemed to me a striking proof of the depth and sincerity of their Christianity," was said by an intimate friend and

relative who saw much of the home life at Alford in the early days. "Just, but hard," is the description given by another.

A passage written by Edward when the prospect of training a young family lay before himself, throws light upon this side of his early home life, and shows the impression of lack of sympathy which it produced upon him.

"Let us," he says, "learn to sympathise and bear with our children. Authority should be love. May we learn to treat them when grown up no longer as children. They will be wiser in many things in their generation, growing as they do with its growth, than we shall be with all our experience. The experience of the old deals rather with the principles of life very often than with the details of a younger generation.

"It is better to draw out the feelings of children, even if the growth to a careless eye be somewhat too luxuriant, than to chill them back into a more precise culture, losing their hearts in the process. It is better to let children find experience in their own little world and roam in it with them, than to lift them up into your castle, even though it be a castle of truth, and enclose them in its stone walls."

There are indications in Edward's correspondence and diaries of an almost exultant sense of freedom when at last he was quite free to think and act on his own responsibility, without consulting home authority—indications which pretty clearly prove that that authority sometimes seemed a heavy burden. Yet throughout life he had for his stern old father a deep and sincere regard mingled with admiration. "Our gallant old father," he often calls him. For his good opinion he was ready to do and endure much; no praise for work

done, and such praise was always hardly gained, did he value more than his. Behind the iron will and exacting disposition were a truth of character and a fidelity to duty which won and retained respect, if not the most tender forms of affection. They might well win and retain it in a son whose own character had in it elements which peculiarly fitted him to understand that of his father. Who that ever knew Edward Thring does not at times recall the vice-like grip of his jaws, the rigid stiffening of his lip, when he had made up his mind to sweep some obstruction from his path, or to crush insubordination ; the fierce light which flashed from his eye as he denounced the school sins with which he had to deal, or the greater sins of the greater world beyond ? His nature, indeed, seemed to have two sides, almost contradictory—verging even on the antagonistic : one a resolute energy of fixed purpose in the defence or assertion of what he thought right, which was ready to bend or crush whatever opposed it, and which had at times little to distinguish it from the temper of a despot ; the other a tenderness of sympathy and humility of mind that made him seem like a little child in his relations to all around him. These were not mere moods,—they were innate characteristics which dwelt in him side by side. That the sterner side of his character—what many thought the arbitrary turn of his mind—may be explained on the strictest lines of heredity, all who knew his father would probably agree. That the gentler side of the man may have a parallel explanation seems equally clear.

The father lived till the age of ninety, dying in 1874, after he had seen the completion of his son's constructive work at Uppingham, with which, in its earlier stages at least, it must be said that he had little

sympathy. The ripe old age which he attained, however, was far exceeded by that of the mother, who long survived her husband, and died in 1891, in the one hundred and second year of her age, and no less than eighty years from the time when she came to Alford as a bride.

Mrs. Thring belonged to a family remarkable for its scholastic connections. Her ancestors had been benefited clergymen in the county of Somerset for seven consecutive generations. Her eldest brother, Dr. Richard Jenkyns, became distinguished first as a tutor and subsequently as Master of Balliol College, Oxford, at the period when that ancient foundation was beginning to rise to that singular eminence for finished scholarship which it still holds among the other colleges of the university.

Dr. Jowett, the late Master of Balliol, has described Dr. Jenkyns as combining in himself a mixture of the dignitary of the Church, a college Don, and a country gentleman, and as the person who had done more for the college than any one else in recent times! Later he was appointed to the Deanery of Wells, continuing to hold the Mastership of Balliol for some time in connection with this new post. A successor at Wells has recorded that he "showed for his cathedral the same large-hearted energy which he had shown before for his college."

Another brother, Henry Jenkyns, was a fellow of Oriel, and afterwards professor of Greek and Theology at Durham University. An elder sister became the wife of Dr. Thomas Gaisford, the eminent scholar and Dean of Christ Church. Mrs. Thring was the second daughter and by no means the least remarkable member of this distinguished and intellectual family. Those who knew her in middle life remember in her a rare

combination of mental activity and of Christian character at once gentle and firm. To those who saw her in her later years she presented a wonderful picture of a happy and interesting old age. Till long past ninety she retained her faculties almost unimpaired ; her handwriting was as firm and clear as in middle age ; her memory was keen and retentive ; her literary interests scarcely diminished. The death of Edward in 1887 gave her a great shock, followed by a severe illness, and after an interval by a slight stroke of paralysis which deprived her of the power of speech. Even then the degree to which she retained her intellectual powers was extraordinary. She took the liveliest interest in literary conversation ; no touch of wit or humour, however delicate, was lost upon her ; a striking or well-expressed thought irradiated her face with smiles. The gentle and resigned patience with which she endeavoured to convey by signs to her nurses the wishes she could no longer express in words indicated a self-control quite remarkable. Once, and once only, after long and unavailing efforts to make her wants understood, did she burst into tears of vexation.

The impression made by her character on her children was profound, and it was not merely one of tenderness. "Mother's idea, too, was that everything should be sacrificed to work and duty," says one of her sons. "A more saintly woman in practice and faith, I believe, cannot be found," writes Edward in his Diary. He dedicated to her his last volume of sermons, and always awaited her criticism on his work, and especially on his religious teaching, with the deepest interest. "Dear mother," he says on an anniversary, "sent me a letter which I hold to be one of the great rewards of my life."

"He never spoke of his mother without a tender dropping of his voice, which made one feel that all that sweetness and tender sympathy which was so marked a characteristic of him was an inheritance from her," writes a friend who had lived on intimate terms with him for years.

Two reminiscences seem worth recording, as indicating her habits of life or views of training. When more than ninety-five years old, and when the failure of her sight made reading difficult, she was able to recite from memory, and with seldom a mistake, the alternate verses of the Psalter, when her nurse, as was usual, read with her the Psalms for the day. The circumstance suggests that Edward probably owed to his mother his curious familiarity with the Psalms, and his marked habit of finding in their words a channel for the expression of his deepest feelings.

Once when asked for recollections of Edward's earliest years, his mother said that he "never seemed so happy as when he was lying on his face on the floor reading." A neighbour used to relate that, making a call one day at Alford, she discovered the lad, then six or seven years old, thus disposed in the library, and completely absorbed in a huge volume of Indian history. The visitor remarked to Mrs. Thring that it seemed a mistake to let the boy read a book so much beyond his years. The mother's reply was that no book which awakened such deep interest could be considered beyond a child's years. Half a century later Thring said that his most vivid conceptions of India were still those which he had derived from this volume.

Of one of his later visits to his mother, Thring says in a letter to a friend :—

I was happy enough to be able to spend a fortnight with

my dear mother at Christmas. There is little to say. She was most bright and fresh, with a laugh like a child at any little bit of fun, taking great delight in having flowers near her, and very lovely she looked in her aged calm with the beautiful blossoms and leafage close to her. She gradually gets weaker, without pain or even discomfort, being drawn, you may say, slowly into light. I always thought, and now I have seen that the departure in peace should be rightly a happy, gentle passing of life to life: there is no mourning in the house; my sister-in-law last week said of herself, that one was filled with "solemn rejoicing." She has a lady nurse attending on her who has quite won her heart. It was pleasant to see her love for her nurse. The end on earth is very near now, we think. When some six weeks ago she had an attack of illness, she was heard in the night praying gently, and saying "how happy she was." To us the mixture of joy, bereavement, and peace is the strangest and most incomprehensible feeling—the irreconcilable reconciled, and yet not quite.

But she was destined, as I have mentioned, to outlive her son. In what has been said may be discerned the two chief forces from which Edward Thring derived his character and early impressions: on the one side a stern paternal authority grounded in a deep but severe sense of Christian duty; on the other a singularly beautiful illustration of Christian life which was tender as well as strong.

It seems pretty clear that during many years the gentle mother thought it well at times to act as an intermediary between the strong-willed father and equally strong-willed son when they came into conflict on questions of judgment. The result was not always of the best. In a note which was apparently inspired by some experience of this kind in his early Uppingham days, Edward says:—

Anything is better than one parent dealing with children through the other. Let all be honest and open affection, and

the end will be happiness. But confounding the separate relations and differences of father and mother will but keep them from ever knowing their children, who cannot express their deeper and intimate feelings in a general form, in a lump, as it were ; whilst the children will mistrust and suspect an intercourse which they never can reach the exact truth about, writing neither to father nor mother, but to a shifting something made up of both, and will in consequence gradually cease to open their hearts unreservedly at all.

But differences vanished as time went on, leaving at last only the tender reverence of a Christian son for Christian parents.

There is some reason to suppose that his father found the task of bending Edward's strong childish will less congenial work than teaching his elder brothers, and that this was in part the reason why he was sent away from home for education at an earlier age than they were. His first school, to which he went shortly after he was eight years old, was a private one at Ilminster, a town about sixteen miles distant from Alford. This school was at the time considered the best in that part of England, and was much patronised by the country gentlemen of Somerset. It was probably equal to others of the period, and the master had a reputation for ability as well as for severity. This entry occurs in Thring's Diary at Uppingham forty-five years later :—“ Mrs. S. also told me she had been to see Mrs. Allen, wife of my first schoolmaster at Ilminster, and that she was immensely interested in the work here. This too came on me as a voice from another world, and I sent the old lady the book of Uppingham photographs, which has pleased her immensely. Both she and her husband worked very hard and never spared themselves, and though the school was dreadfully mistaken I believe they meant well.”

But the immediate impression which the school and its methods made upon the lad was decisive and lasting. "All my life long," he said in a public address in 1885, "the good and evil of that place has been on me. It is even now one of my strongest impressions, with its misery, the misery of a clipped hedge, with every clip through flesh and blood and fresh young feelings; its snatches of joy, its painful but honest work—grim, but grimly in earnest—and its prison morality of discipline. The most lasting lesson of my life was the failure of suspicion and severity to get inside the boy world, however much it troubled our outsides."

Only a year or two before he died, when driving from Alford towards Ilminster with a dear friend, he said that the feeling of horror and dread which, as a small boy, he used to feel for that journey to school still came over him upon the road. "And," he added, "it was my memories of that school and its severities which first made me long to try if I could not make the life of small boys at school happier and brighter." The evidence shows clearly enough that this long remaining impression of restriction and misery had sufficient cause. One brother remembers that he was flogged for "a very little laugh" at dinner, when talking and laughing seem to have been alike forbidden. Another finds that his only recollection of pleasure at the school was in the hour of bedtime, and in one day during the half, when a master took the boys to visit some neighbouring quarries. At all other times they could only exercise themselves within the playground, which was surrounded on all sides by high walls. A trying change this for boys after the free, outdoor life at Alford. An old schoolfellow remembers that

Edward's "talents" made him a favourite with the headmaster. He also states that the lad's inclinations already showed themselves in his fondness for "acting the schoolmaster" with a small class of boys whom he would get together and coach in their lessons. But whatever slight pleasure he got in this way, Ilminster left on his mind not only the strongest repugnance to an atmosphere of suspicion and restraint in the management of boys, but inclined him to look upon the larger freedom of a public school, with all its temptations to license, as on the whole infinitely preferable to the other. It was an entirely new and different school-world which opened upon him when, after three years at Ilminster, he was removed to Eton.

## CHAPTER II

### ETON

1832-1841

IT was in the autumn of 1832, while Dr. Keate was still headmaster, that Thring came to Eton. He was first entered as an oppidan at the house of Mr. Chapman, afterwards Bishop of Colombo, and later at that of Mr. Goodford, who subsequently became headmaster and provost.

The distinction between collegers and oppidans existed then as now at Eton. The opportunity which this great and ordinarily expensive school has always offered to its seventy scholars of securing an education on very easy terms made parents desire to get their sons placed upon the foundation as collegers. The pecuniary advantage of this was greatly enhanced half a century ago by the fact that from Eton a boy on the foundation proceeded in due course to Cambridge to become a scholar, and finally a fellow of King's College, the scholarships and fellowships of that foundation being then reserved entirely for Eton collegers. But the advantage had its qualifications. When Thring came to Eton, places upon the school foundation were not, as now, won by competition, but were secured simply by nomination.

Strangely enough these valuable nominations were easily obtained. The numbers provided for by the foundation were seldom full. Even so late as 1841, the year in which Thring left, there were only two candidates for thirty-five vacancies. This state of things is sufficiently explained by the inefficiency of the discipline and organisation among the collegers, and by the treatment to which lower boys were subjected. Parents who wished to avoid the worst evils of Long Chamber, and yet secure the advantages of the scholarships, entered their boys as oppidans, and allowed them to remain such until the extreme limit of age was reached at which they could enter upon the foundation. This was the course pursued in Thring's case. His eldest brother, Theodore, who preceded him at Eton, was never on the foundation, but finally became captain of the oppidans, as Edward became as a colleger captain of the school. The latter remained at the school as an oppidan about three years, and then entered on residence as a colleger in 1835.

An intimate companion of these days, the late Rev. J. C. Keate, son of the headmaster, was wont to recall the cheerful courage with which he reconciled himself, from a sense of duty, to a change which was extremely distasteful to him.

Of his oppidan life only the barest hints can now be recovered. Mr. Chapman was also tutor and house-master to Theodore, and as the latter was now about completing his school course, and had, apparently with a fair chance of success, competed in two successive years for the lately-established Newcastle scholarship, the tutor's letters to Alford deal chiefly with the elder brother and his prospects. Of Edward in his first year at school he reports: "The little fellow goes on well

too, but is not quite so steady at any but his poetical work as I would wish." In the following year he says : " The little fellow goes on capitally. He is a sharp, clear-headed, good little boy, and will, I hope, turn out a tasteful and correct scholar." Again in 1834 : " Since I last wrote little Edward has been doing well on all points, and has secured his reward."

Mr. Chapman's letters to Thring's father show that he was one of those conscientious, painstaking tutors whose labours did much to mitigate, for the boys who happened to be under their charge, the admitted evils of the Eton system of his day. They prove clearly that under the direction of these tutors, if not in the class-rooms, much hard reading was done by boys of ability, who were willing to work. The account which he gives of one of the earlier examinations for the Newcastle scholarship indicates the breadth of classical reading and the practice in composition which were looked for in the best pupils at Eton at that time, or, at anyrate, the standard which the masters set before themselves. He says :—

Our examinations went off well. The successful candidate was a pupil of Coleridge's, the boy on whom all calculated. Having been successful at Oxford a year previous he entered the arena quite a practised gladiator. The examination continued five days : the first four all on paper ; they then classed nine (three of whom I am glad to claim) and examined them in Xenophon and Cicero *viva voce*. The first day was wholly divinity—Matthew and Acts with miscellaneous questions. For the three following days they had to translate passages from Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Sophocles, Theocritus, Virgil, Horace, Livy, Pliny, with miscellaneous questions to each.

In composition they had Latin elegaic verse, Latin theme, Greek hexameter, all original. Greek iambics from Shakespeare, Greek prose translation from Robertson, and Latin

prose from *Spectator*. Pretty sharp work, but they stood it fairly, and next year there will be hard fighting. The divinity and original composition were the strongest points, the translations much the weakest. We must put Theo. into training, for the competition will become more honourable every year. Of thirty candidates nine were selected. It will infuse a very right spirit into the school, and introduce a more healthy feeling, if I may so call it. . . . I mean that *says* must triumph; no boy will carry it by talent only, the examination is too wide and general, the auxiliaries too few for a boy to trust to himself. No dictionaries or lexicons allowed.

For Mr. Chapman Thring always entertained the greatest regard and veneration. Twenty years after leaving Eton, when about to build his chapel at Uppingham, he records with great delight, and as a happy omen, the fact that the first subscription paid towards it was from his old tutor, then Bishop of Colombo, and he adds: "I rejoice that it comes from one whom I honour and respect so much as I do him. It has cheered me greatly."

And again in 1868 he writes: "I was glad to send Bishop Chapman one of my books. I have such a great respect for him, from the memory of the efforts which he made at Eton, under most impossible circumstances, in old days, to do his duty by each boy, and the ability which almost made it not impossible, at a time when the idea of doing something for every boy entered no other heart or head of living schoolmaster as far as I know."

After the restraints of Ilminster the first years as an oppidan at Eton gave the boy a wonderful sense of free life. Mr. Chapman was strict as a disciplinarian, but, as masters then went, not severe. One of his pupils of that period mentions particularly that he was not in the habit, as some masters were, of sending up boys to be

flogged by the headmaster, but that he usually dealt with them by other means in his pupil room. In discussing the question of corporal punishment at Uppingham, Thring mentions in a letter to a parent that experience had made him well aware that the birch very distinctly abraded the skin of a boy, but whether this experience was gained at Ilminster or Eton does not appear. He seems, however, to have escaped the severer side of Eton life in this respect. In the matter of fagging, also, he was fortunate. He and his friend Mackarness were fags to his cousin, Arthur Hobhouse (now Lord Hobhouse), and no doubt the severities of the system were mitigated by the cousinly friendship of the boys, which was continued throughout life.

Still the period of Thring's entry was not one at which a boy was likely to imbibe milk-and-water views of school life. He entered, as has been said, in October 1832.

It was at the end of the previous term, on June 30th, 1832, that Dr. Keate made a noteworthy addition to the many traditions of Eton. In order to crush an incipient rebellion he flogged at one time more than eighty boys. The lads were summoned in detachments from their boarding-houses after having retired for the night, and the work of punishment went on from ten o'clock till long past midnight. All names on the alphabetical list of the school from the letter M onward were subjected to this manifestly impartial discipline. From the headmaster's point of view the result justified the exceptional effort. The boys cheered him as he withdrew from the field of action, and his authority was never after seriously questioned.

Great severity of rule has always been attributed to

Dr. Keate, and many of the tales, some apocryphal, some true, which illustrate this, are ridiculous enough. But those who knew him best are united in affirming that he was really of a singularly kind and gentle nature. The fact seems to be that when Keate took the headmastership of Eton he did so under the fixed impression that the place could only be held by an iron hand. This opinion was in a measure justified by the public school traditions and the prevailing temper of the time. It was still strong in Thring's mind when he himself became a headmaster, much as he wished to mitigate the severities of school life.

Mr. Chapman resigned his assistant mastership while Thring was yet an oppidan, and for a short time the boy was transferred to the house of Mr. Goodford. For Mr. Goodford, also, who afterwards became Provost, Thring always entertained a high regard. But the limit of time was soon after reached at which he could be placed on the foundation, and in 1835 he went into residence as a colleger.

It is difficult now to picture adequately the school life to which this change introduced him ; still more difficult to realise that the conditions in which he was placed could have existed in the most famous of English schools only half a century ago. It is said that Archdeacon Hodgson was induced to accept the provostship five years later, in 1840, chiefly by the wish to do something to better the condition of the collegers. It is little wonder that the circumstances should have deeply moved the mind of a thoughtful and conscientious man ; little wonder that they should have suggested ideas of school reform even to a boy, and in later life given energy to the war which he waged on the barrack system of dealing with boys. We have a sketch of the

domestic arrangements for the collegers written by an impartial hand.

The nominal number of boys on the foundation was 70, and for these four dormitories only were provided. There was accommodation for 52 boys in Long Chamber—a room 172 feet long, 27 wide, and 15 feet 6 inches high—and for the remaining 18 in Lower Chamber, and in Upper and Lower Carter's Chambers, two smaller rooms which took their name from an usher in the early part of the eighteenth century. These rooms contained little beside the wooden bedsteads, 4 feet 6 inches wide, and a series of bureaus. Chairs and tables did not exist except for the privileged few, and the wind whistled through the gaping casements. Candlesticks were made by folding the cover of a school book, and cutting a hole in the middle of it to receive the candle. A college servant was supposed to sweep the rooms daily, to make the beds, and in winter to light the fires ; but this was all, and he did not sleep on the premises.<sup>1</sup> In point of fact the lower boys always had to make the beds of the 16 seniors, viz the 10 collegers in the sixth form, and the 6 in the "Liberty" at the top of the upper division ; and also to fetch water for them overnight from the pump in Weston's yard. They themselves, and members of the fifth form, had no chance of washing in college, for they had neither washstands nor basins. A deputation which waited on one of the authorities about the year 1838, with a request that a supply of water might be laid on in college, was dismissed with the rebuff, "You will be wanting gas and Turkey carpets next."

A boy who passed unscathed the ordeal of a colleger's life must have been gifted in no common degree with purity of mind and strength of will. Without dwelling longer on this painful topic, it should be recorded that in 1834 the writer of a pamphlet entitled *The Eton System of Education Vindicated*, was obliged to admit that, wherever the fame of Eton had

<sup>1</sup> Writing to his brother Theodore in 1873 on the question of necessary school expenses, Thring says: "A great deal can be saved by the cheap and nasty in training, e.g. by such proceedings as we had in college at Eton—one ill-paid servant to 70 boys."

spread, the name of Long Chamber was "a proverb and reproach."<sup>1</sup>

In a paper apparently prepared for some school magazine, there is a slight but graphic picture, in Thring's own words, of the Long Chamber, and the chances it gave to boy life. After speaking of Ilminster and the school methods pursued there, he says :—

At the opposite pole to this, perhaps the old Long Chamber at Eton, now done away with for years, may be placed, with its seventy boys locked up from 8 P.M. till next morning, utterly without supervision, left entirely to themselves in the great, bare, dirty room in which they were supposed to live and did sleep. Who can ever forget that knew it the wild, rough, rollicking freedom, the frolic and the fun of that land of misrule, with its strange code of traditional boy-law, which really worked rather well as long as the sixth form were well disposed or sober? Oh! the unearthly delight of the leaping matches at the end of each school time when, all the mattresses spread on the hard oak floor to pitch on, and one to take off from, the collegers celebrated their Olympic games. Then the squibbing matches, and that memorable night when suddenly, in the midst of a well-contested fight, dimly described amidst the smoke, the headmaster appeared, like "Titan on the misty mountain top," blazing with wrath, calling, as well as the dense cough mixture of vapour would let him, for the captain of the chamber, who was judiciously absent. Then the suppers, when they could be got, and the closely-packed set of boys seated on the beds round the fireplace. . . . Surely for ever this orbit of the memory holds sacred one beefsteak, which, plate on knee, was just beginning to disappear, when a malicious squib came straight at it; up went the plate; to lose the steak was not to be thought of; up went the supporting legs; a squib in the lap was also beyond a thought, and what was to be done? Too broad a surface still remained exposed to fire, the heroic sufferer held to his steak, the squib burnt out, and he resumed his

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell Lyte's *History of Eton College*, pp. 411-13.

seat slowly, victorious, though not unscathed, and solaced the wounds which no breastplate covered with mouthfuls of homeopathic beef. Shall song be silent of that Decius who slipped down the stairs on his back with his messmate's and his own pot of beer in his hand, and did not spill it, sternly upholding his steady hands in spite of each successive stair touchingly appealing to his bones? The endless tide of adventures comes streaming up as those days are recalled, days full of incident that rival anything in Tom Brown's experiences and the pleasant histories of his graphic pen. And all the time side by side with this went on the oppidan house life on the whole in a satisfactory, humanising, effective way. This wild college life was certainly a very different type from the sneak-as-you-please, but never-wet-your-feet existence of the private school, and it was the better of the two, for freedom is better than slavery ; but, alas ! for the waste and ruin in the future, the wretchedness, and coarseness, and idleness at the time which it brought on the majority of those cast into its whirl. It was not training, for training does not mean some boys turning out well in spite of disadvantages, a bit more than farming means the growth of grass and corn in spite of not draining and bad ploughing.

Again in a paper published in 1862 he says :—

A mob of boys cannot be educated. Not five-and-twenty years ago, with open gates up to eight o'clock at night all the year round, and sentinels set the winter through, as regularly as in the trenches before Sebastopol, to warn us of the coming master, the boys of the finest foundation in the world starved their way up to the university. Whistle or hiss marked the approach of friend or foe. Rough and ready was the life they led. Cruel, at times, the suffering and wrong ; wild the profligacy. For after eight o'clock at night no prying eye came near till the following morning ; no one lived in the same building ; cries of joy or pain were equally unheard ; and, excepting a code of laws of their own, there was no help or redress for any one. Many can recollect this.

In a note from his most intimate Eton friend—the

late Bishop Mackarness—there is a reference to the same subject :—

I will not pretend—out of my less generous nature—to pour forth the same hearty enthusiasm which comes from your perennial fountain. But I may say, without hypocrisy, that I do heartily sympathise with you in your untiring efforts to raise the business of education into a loftier sphere, and in your wish to banish the meaner elements of the work, as we have known it at Eton. Recollections of "My Dame's," and of "Jacob's Ladder," etc., and of various episodes in the daily life there, do not recall the nobler side of boyish character and feeling ! I trust that things are better now.

A friend and contemporary of Thring has furnished some reminiscences which throw further light on the life in college at that time. He says :—

I remember he messed, that is to say, breakfasted, in private lodgings used by day, with a King's scholar like himself in honesty, muscular strength, and high-minded peaceful courage, John F. Mackarness (late Bishop of Oxford), then President of the Eton Society. . . . This privacy was a set-off against the noise and squalor of the "chambers" in which the college made us spend the winter evenings. In the chambers it was not easy even for a Thring or a Mackarness to read or write studiously. Once a year the eldest boys had to write a sort of compilation called an "Essay," and they began it in the last week. To secure silent hours they waited till the others were in bed ; half of them wrote by the fireside for the first half of the sleeping time, and then called the other half. I state this to show how unfit our dormitories were for students. But there were three recesses in a tower, of which two were dangerously damp ; there were also about eight wooden cupboards with space for a writing-shelf, a seat, and a book-shelf or two. These, like the three recesses, were called studies ; students who could bear cold sat in them on winter evenings, locking out all uninvited boys. We sometimes paid rent to schoolfellows who had by seniority a right to these cells, and who were not studious.

Then besides the studies we had by day the rooms in lodging-houses,<sup>1</sup> where we breakfasted, washed ourselves, kept our clothes and books, and received our visitors. These were real sanctuaries, known to exist, but never invaded by our teachers, much less by the Provost and fellows of our college. In the inviolability of these rooms we had a great advantage over the oppidans or non-foundationers. When not interrupted by the stupid class-lessons which we had to sit through about fifteen half hours a week, we could spend our day there in tranquil study and unobserved enjoyment of literature.

The contempt here expressed for the ordinary class-work of the school, which was all upon which the collegers had to depend for instruction, seems fully justified, not only for them, but for the mass of Eton pupils. Wretched as were the appliances for giving the collegers a wholesome and comfortable school life, the provisions for giving instruction throughout the school, if we omit the private work to which reference has been made, were even more inadequate. When Dr. Keate became headmaster he found himself in sole charge of a class of 170 boys, and later the number increased to at least 200. This intolerable state of affairs led to some attempt at reform, but even then the headmaster was left in charge of 100 boys. We learn that in 1833, the year after Thring entered, there were only 9 masters to 570 boys in the Upper School. Manifestly no pretence even could be made of giving adequate individual training to the boys. Private work could not remedy a defect so great, except for a very few, and a tutor who was at all popular and successful was as much paralysed by numbers in the pupil room as in the public schoolroom. Classes so large that a boy could

<sup>1</sup> In Thring's Diary occurs this entry, written twenty-five years after leaving Eton : "Sent £5 to-day to Mrs. Joel, where I had rooms at Eton. I hope she is alive. She was a good woman and kind. I should like to give her a little pleasure."

only reckon on being called up to construe two or three times during the half could scarcely seem otherwise than stupid. As a matter of fact, while the clever and willing had opportunities to learn, while the efforts of private tutors sent up pupils to the universities to win the highest distinctions, numbers of the careless and weaker boys were left to shift for themselves, without any serious effort being made to give them training.

It has seemed necessary to outline at some length the conditions under which the lad's school years were spent, since they undoubtedly gave direction to the whole future career of the man. It was his own experiences as a boy which kindled in him that desire to make schools better, which finally became the one aim of his life. Already at Eton the leaven was beginning to work. A school-fellow writes :—"I remember once hearing him talk against a particular point in the Eton system in a way that made me think that, though industrious and ambitious, he was still very independent in his ideas of education."

A few slight personal touches of his Eton life we have, more or less suggestive of characteristics which were to show themselves in the man.

One story comes from his old school friend Witts, afterwards a fellow-worker at Uppingham. The spaces between the buttresses of the school chapel at Eton were used as fives courts; indeed, from them the game is said to have had its origin, and the courts commonly in use their form. Thring, a very small fellow, had one day gained in the usual way, by early occupation, the right to use one of these courts. A big and bullying senior ordered him to give it up, and tried to enforce the order by the usual methods of schoolboy coercion. But threats, kicks, and blows could extort

nothing save "I'll die first" from the lad, who had thrown himself on the flags, and in defence of his rights refused to move. The incident seems to have been public enough to impress the minds of the boys, and the cognomen of "Little Die First" is said to have clung to him for several years.

Rev. Charles T. Hoskins, who for some time shared his rooms at Joel's, mentions that "at fives he would almost invariably choose the sharer of his room to 'take off' any other two on the 'four-wall,' however good they might be; and so inspiriting was his resolute manner of playing that even his companion played the better for it, and he was seldom beaten." And another Eton contemporary, who has already been quoted, writes:—

"There was a game, then peculiar to Eton, played with one ball by two or four boys on flagged slopes between the buttresses of the chapel. In deference to ancestral arithmetic it was named after the two sets of fingers 'Fives'. Thring was a capital fives player, and this, I think, did much for his health both at school and afterward at college. I remember he used to make a good fight on the fives court with the captain of the cricket club, who had more reach. . . . His pluck and muscle were peerless." These reminiscences will interest many an old Uppingham boy who remembers how the headmaster and his friend Witts year after year challenged the school champions at fives, and till near the age of fifty were never beaten.

At cricket and football, in both of which he afterwards freely joined with his boys at Uppingham, he played a vigorous game, though not with such striking skill as at fives. His delight in athletics continued throughout life, and for more than a quarter of a

century his Diary, among all its records of more serious matters, rarely fails to mention the chief features of every athletic contest that occurred in the school.

One of Thring's most intimate Eton friends describes him as a boy overflowing with fun and mischief. Another says:—"The epithet which I would apply to him is 'sturdy'—sturdy in build, in mind, in principle, in fidelity, in antagonism to all that was wrong and false." A third notes:—"I remember that as an upper boy he was in the habit of going, when school hours permitted, to an evening service at Windsor (very unusual for boys) with the late Bishop of Oxford. He bore a high character for integrity and honesty."

Some sides of the free life which he lived at Eton always appealed strongly to Thring's individual character. In his later life there was a current opinion that his aspiration was to make Uppingham an "Eton without Eton's faults," but he himself denied having consciously had such a thought in his mind. Love for the place and antagonism to the system as he had known it may be taken as his permanent after-feeling about his old school. When, during his Uppingham career, the headmastership became vacant, and a leading London journal had put forward his name as a suitable person for the post, the comment in his Diary is: "Were such an offer possible I could not accept it. I could not cure what I believe to be the evils of the Eton system, and I could not work on what I believe to be false lines."

After spending nine years at Eton Thring's career at the school closed with an event very memorable in the life of a boy. As senior colleger and captain of the school he became captain of Montem in that year, the last occasion but one on which this once famous

Eton festival, now become a vague tradition, was celebrated.

In one form or another the institution of Montem is believed to have existed at Eton from the early days of Queen Elizabeth, probably having its origin in the ancient custom of electing and installing a boy bishop. Celebrated at first yearly and later biennially, it became during the last seventy years of its existence a triennial festival, and gradually developed into a great social function, and probably the most gorgeous spectacle which has ever been seen in connection with school life.

The Sovereign, when in residence at Windsor, was usually present with other members of the Royal family; ministers of State came down from London; parents and friends of the Eton boys attended from a distance; the equipages of the country gentry far and wide around Eton increased the throng and added to the brilliancy of the spectacle. At Thring's Montem in 1841 the newly-opened railway to Slough made it possible for great crowds of outsiders to reach Windsor, and add themselves to the mob of local sight-seers. The newspaper reports of the time mention the arrival of numerous London trains bringing as many as a thousand visitors each.

The materials for gathering a clear idea of what the great Eton festival was like are probably more complete in the case of Thring's Montem than of any other. The presence of the newly-married Queen and the Prince Consort, who then saw the festival for the first time, led to the proceedings being very fully reported in the local and metropolitan journals of that date. Two pictures, painted at the time by Evans to represent the chief figures among the boys who took part in it, are now in the possession of Lord Braybrooke.

Both of these have been engraved, and are probably well known to old Etonians. A very graphic description of the festival, chiefly based on Thring's Montem, is given in *Blackwood* for September 1891, by the Rev. G. C. Green, who took part in the Montems of 1841 and 1844. Among Thring's papers is a complete collection of his Montem bills, showing all the receipts and expenditures in connection with it, and a letter from his mother to a relative, giving a pleasant description of the day's events. This full information makes it possible to sketch with some accuracy the main features of this great school function.

Mr. Green, after describing Thring's Montem as "probably the gayest and most magnificent that had ever been seen," says :—

The spectacle itself was such a gorgeous one, and it was associated with so many old memories and associations of the past, that all old Etonians throughout the country, and all the friends and relatives of Etonians from far and near, strove to be present on that day, and curiosity drew immense numbers besides, who were perfect strangers, so that a greater crowd assembled at Eton on that day than has probably ever assembled there since its discontinuance, and every single person who was present was asked to contribute something, large or small, according to his means, and all the money so collected was given to the lucky boy who happened to hold the proud position of captain of Montem.

The captaincy of Montem was decided as follows :—Each year at the July "election trials," as they were called, the boys who had passed their eighteenth birthday were placed in order of merit, the first on the list being captain of the school. Whenever vacancies occurred among the seventy members of King's College, the news was brought at once to Eton, when the head

boy was required to proceed to Cambridge. Twenty days' grace was allowed him to make preparations for leaving school. "If the grace should happen to expire on the very eve of Montem day, the right of being captain would lapse to the colleger who was next on the list, so that the twentieth day before Whitsun-Tuesday in that year was a very critical day for those two boys, the captain and second colleger at that time. Till midnight it could not be known for certain who would be captain. We called that night 'Montem-sure Night.' We sat up late in our long dormitory, called Long Chamber. Just before midnight the ends of all those heavy wooden bedsteads were raised high in the air, the large wooden shutters were held by ready hands, and then, as the last stroke of midnight sounded from the clock tower, the shutters were slammed to, the bedsteads let fall on the floor with a thundering sound that could be heard in Windsor Castle, and 'Montem sure!' was shouted with all the power and energy that the excited young watchers could exert. The right of being captain was now vested absolutely in the senior colleger, and preparations for the event could go on uninterruptedly."

These preparations undoubtedly interfered sadly with the work of the summer half, and offered many temptations to extravagance and drunkenness. The gorgeous dresses used on Montem day had to be ordered and fitted; the captain was bound by custom to entertain his chief supporters at preliminary breakfasts and "tasting dinners" at Salt Hill. The boys themselves had to practise their parts; and the expected inroad of visitors with its attendant excitements made serious work difficult or impossible.

The nominal object of Montem was to make a col-

lection of money to be given to the captain to assist him in his university career. This collection on Montem day was entrusted to two "salt-bearers" and twelve "runners," who, splendidly attired in fancy costumes, and usually protected by armed attendants, were stationed with their collection bags at various points: in Eton itself, at Maidenhead Bridge, Windsor Bridge, Datchet Bridge, Colnebrook, Iver, Gerard's Cross, Slough, and Salt Hill. Here they levied toll on all passers-by, giving in return to the contributors the Montem ticket, with its justifying inscription, *Mos pro lege*. Meanwhile the procession of the boys marching in military dress and array to Salt Hill (*ad Montem*) was the picturesque feature of the day's proceedings. With a royal bodyguard of regular troops drawn up and military bands playing, the boys marched around the school yard, under the eyes of the royal and other distinguished visitors who looked down upon them from the Provost's Lodge. "A long line we formed," says Mr. Green, "as may be easily imagined, being over 600 strong. So we streamed out into the Slough road on our march for Salt Hill. The procession was swelled all along its route by the thousands of visitors from all parts of England, on horseback, on foot, in every kind of conveyance, ladies in their gayest dresses, all combining to make such a picture as will never be seen again."

At Thring's Montem the crowd was greater than had ever been known before. His brother Henry,<sup>1</sup> who had come down from Cambridge to be present at Montem, mentions a circumstance which illustrates the density of the throng. At the entrance to the inn at Salt Hill the crush in the procession was so great that

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Thring.

he became anxious for Edward's safety. On pointing out the danger to one of the soldiers on duty the tall grenadier leaned over, lifted the lad from the throng, and passed him on to comrades over the heads of the crowd till he was in a place of safety.

The festivities among the boys began more than a fortnight before Montem day. Bills for large breakfast parties at the White Hart Inn appear as early as May 14th, and continue at intervals, while confectioners and cooks seem to have been busy supplying the captain's table at his own lodgings.

For Montem day itself W. Atkins sends in accounts for —

160 gentlemen at breakfast at 6s. 3d.	£	5	0	0
330 do.—dinner at 6s. 6d.	.	107	5	0
60 polemen at 5s.	.	15	0	0

These charges only include the solid portions of the two chief banquets of the day. Botham, the landlord of the Windmill Inn, sends in a supplementary account. Some of the items must have furnished weighty arguments for the abolition of Montem. I select a few —

84 bottles port—5 returned	.	.	£	23	14	0
84 sherry—16 returned	.	.	20	8	0	0
72 cider—30 returned	.	.	4	4	0	0
48 do.—steward's order	.	.	4	10	0	0
48 porter	.	.	2	8	0	0
96 champagne—14 returned	.	.	35	17	6	0
36 claret—10 returned	.	.	13	0	0	0
Lemon juice	.	.	0	18	0	0
Sugar	.	.	0	18	0	0
Lemon and nutmegs	.	.	0	7	0	0
2 bottles brandy	.	.	1	0	0	0
1 barrel ale	.	.	1	16	0	0

The captain entertained his principal supporters

among the boys at special tables, and for these there are separate bills—

20 dinners (captain)	.	.	.	£16 19	0
32 do. (salt-bearers)	.	.	.	24 15	0
12 do. (runners)	.	.	.	8 13	0

The additional wine bill for these latter tables includes 69 bottles of champagne, 13 of claret, 9 of hock, 11 of sherry, 3 of port, and 12 of cider, at a cost of £50 : 16s., or an average of more than 15s. per boy for wine. After this it is not surprising to find the accounts closing with pretty large charges for broken glass.

When dinner was over it was a custom for the boys to adjourn to the gardens of the inn, and there use the swords they carried in hacking the currant and gooseberry bushes, or decapitating the cabbages and other vegetables. A bill for damages of this kind seems to have been a regular item in the Montem charges, but none is found among Thrинг's accounts, and one of the journals of the time mentions that on this occasion the landlord of the inn recouped his losses by charging an admission fee to the grounds. This was paid by great numbers of people in order to watch the boys at their work of destruction.

£43 : 12s. was paid to the band of the Life Guards; £31 to that of the 60th Rifles.

The two hired attendants of the captain, Atkins and Goodchild, must have been gorgeously arrayed in their suits of blue and gold at £5 : 12s. each, "superfine beavers" at a guinea, silk hose 12s., gilt buckles £1 : 10s., and so on.

These charges are sufficient to show the extravagant expenditure which marked the festival. The authorities

seem to have felt powerless in attempting to check the expense and the extortion of tradesmen.

In enclosing to Thring's father Montem bills to the amount of £640 : 12 : 11, the headmaster, Dr. Hawtrey, says :—

The whole of the bills are now paid. 'There remains only the sums usually given to the runners and salt-bearers and the £50 which made the bargain between your son and Gouge.<sup>1</sup> These sums being fixed payments, and not entering into the bills over which any control can be exercised, I have left to you and him to settle.

It is provoking to find more could not have been done to lessen the expenses ; but I believe it to have been impossible. Mr. Botham's bill seems to me exorbitant, but he has tickets to produce, and I do not see, therefore, how it can be disputed. Still after all the extortion of the day, and the large indispensable expenses, there still remains a sum which will be a valuable addition to the next three or four years' college life. With every good wish to your son, and a most sincere testimony to his successful exertions and irreproachable character, I am, etc.

On Montem evening the headmaster reports that after a counting which occupied two hours, the bags of the salt-bearers had been found to contain—

In cheques . . . . .	£	106	3	0
In notes . . . . .	265	0	0	
In sovereigns and guineas . . . . .	396	1	0	
In half-sovereigns . . . . .	165	10	0	
In crowns and half-crowns . . . . .	132	15	0	
In shillings . . . . .	135	17	0	
In sixpences . . . . .	43	10	0	
In fourpences . . . . .	4	16	0	
				—
	£	1249	12	0

<sup>1</sup> This fixed payment is explained as follows :—Since the captaincy was undecided between the first and second boys in college until twenty days before Montem day, it was the custom for these lads to mutually agree that whichever was captain should pay the other £50.

A sum of £19 : 15 : 6 received later raised the whole collection to £1269 : 7 : 6. At the three previous Montems in 1832, 1835, and 1838, it had been respectively £873 : 0 : 0, £1006 : 14 : 0, and £1186 : 13 : 0. Large as the sum was in 1841, it appears to have been below the anticipations formed from the multitude of visitors present. Dr. Hawtrey writes, in announcing it: "I am sorry to say that the sum collected appears to fall surprisingly short of the amount which was imagined. . . . However mortifying this result may be after such an account as we had heard, still the collection must be considered a good one."

Mrs. Thring, who had driven up with her husband and a large family party from Somerset to attend the festival of which her son was the chief figure, writes the following account of the day's proceedings to a relative:—

My DEAR MADAM—The *Morning Post* which I sent you on Saturday as soon as I returned would give you a much better account than I can possibly do of the grand features of the Montem, still we think that you would like to hear our proceedings, which Gale desired me to give you. The business of the day begins very early, for before I was dressed at half-past seven, I was called to look at one of the salt-bearers come to the lodging for his "salt," as the money is termed—a very handsome youth (the captain of the oppidans, a son of Mr. Piggott of Brockley Combe), dressed in a most splendid Spanish dress with hat and feathers. The captain of the collegers, the hero of the day, Edward, wears only a captain's uniform with a star on his breast to distinguish him, and he really did not look absurd, though so little. We went at nine o'clock to breakfast with Mr. Goodford, one of the masters, who, as such, has the power of admitting his party to the school yard, which cannot otherwise be obtained without a ticket from the headmaster. We then were taken to the College Hall, and soon after entered about 200 of the youths,

all dressed either in fancy costumes or in scarlet, to breakfast, whilst a military band played and the whole area was filled with genteel people. Through Mr. Henry Woodhouse's introduction, we next got admission into the Provost's Lodge, and were in the first row of a line in a room through which the Queen and her suite passed, so that we saw her fully and closely. The Prince Albert is a gentlemanly, good-looking man, with a pleasing, but rather melancholy expression. After the Queen had passed we returned into the school yard, and had a front view of her from the open window bowing to the boys, who paraded before her, cheering her most vociferously to the extent of their power. This done the procession of Etonians moved in rank and file to the mound at Salt Hill, and we got into our carriage and went up the road. The Queen passed us in her carriage quite close, and we arrived in time to witness the waving of the flag at the top of the mound by the boy ensign, and the renewed cheering the Queen. All the youths then went to the dinner given by the captain to the whole school, and as many private friends as he chooses to invite, and during their banquet the company adjourned to the gardens of the inn, where the band continued to play, and where you have again a well-dressed *mob*. We then returned to our lodgings, where we had ready for ourselves and friends abundance of cold chicken pie, etc., and from that time till eleven at night we had a constant succession either of visitors or boys to enjoy it. We took a turn, however, in the evening into the beautiful playing fields of the college, which are in themselves worth seeing, independently of the multitude of well-dressed ladies and beautiful fancy dresses of the boys. In the evening we saw these last to perfection, as between twenty and thirty came into our lodgings to supper at different times. The day was delightful for the purpose, and the collection the best ever made—upwards of £1250; the expenses are enormous,—I believe £800. But still Edward is a lucky fellow, as he is now gone off to King's College, Cambridge, as a scholar, and goes on regularly to be fellow in course of time. It was a source of great gratification to us to find that he had not only secured the approbation of those in authority, but was likewise extremely popular with the juniors. We have, indeed, abundant cause for thankfulness, and are,

I hope, truly grateful for the blessings conferred upon us. . . . We all separated next day—Theresa, Gale, and Theodore for town—Miss Hood, daughter of Sir Alexander Hood, whom we had taken with us, returned with me to Alford—Miss Thring to Clifton—Henry and Edward to Cambridge. . . . Henry was very anxious that we should have gone to the installation at Cambridge, but that is now postponed in consequence of the intended dissolution of Parliament, which will find employment enough for many of the visitors. . . .

I enclose one of the copies of the Montem Ode,<sup>1</sup> written by a friend of Edward's, according to custom, in which he has

<sup>1</sup> Any account of Montem would be incomplete which omitted mention of the doggerel verse here referred to as the Montem Ode. It was supposed to be the composition of a person (quite fictitious) styled the "Montem Poet." The ode was printed at the captain's expense, and distributed during the day, as a broad sheet ballad, by a man usually dressed in character, to whom the sale was a somewhat valuable perquisite. Thring's Ode was written by a friend of his own class, his lieutenant for the day. A few lines will be sufficient to illustrate its character:—

Step out, strut well, before such great spectators ;  
 Show off, smart lower boys, before your "maters,"  
 You cock your chains up pretty well, but still  
 You'd all of you be better for a drill ;  
 Though legs be cased in duck, and toes in boots,  
 Our regiment is full of raw recruits ;  
 Eyes right—though sisters giggle, "Don't you see John,  
 How you kick up the dust ?" though Gov'nors wink,  
 Threatening to draft you to the Spanish legion  
 Unless you make your mark. But, pray, don't think  
 That I would such aspersions fling  
 Upon our stately, portly Captain Thring,  
 That stern Caucasian chief, who rears  
 Behind six files of mountaineers  
 His proud, majestic figure ;  
 His well-bedizened retinue  
 Almost, alas ! obstruct the view ;  
 However well they be attired,  
 Perhaps it were to be desired  
 Their lord were rather bigger ;  
 But yet his purse—we hope—we know—  
 Will beat in length his person,  
 And ladies can't expect each beau  
 To stalk as tall as Curzon :  
 So drink his health and praise his feast,  
 And, when the holiday has ceased,  
 Say, one and all, with grateful heart,  
 Thring has played well the captain's part.

remarked pleasantly enough on Edward's littleness. Will you please return it, as it is the only one I have.

Obviously Montem was a celebration which was likely to put a severe strain upon the character of a captain. One of Thring's old school and college friends writes :—

Edward Thring was the last but one of those who had the luck to be captains of Eton, or eldest of the foundation scholars, when the triennial festival called Montem was held. I have known three others . . . all of whom suffered morally from being supplied with the inordinate credit given by innkeepers and shopkeepers to Montem captains, recipients of many hundreds of pounds collected as toll rather than free gift, and squandered on parasites or drink. He alone in my time escaped the evil effects of the absurd institution. He went through the summer school term as a schoolboy and the subsequent three years at Cambridge in perfect sobriety and purity. This did not strike me at the time ; it was a matter of course. . . . But afterwards when I learned why Dr. Hawtrey abolished Montem, I began to see the danger from which Thring's very strong character had preserved him.

The magnificence and extravagance of Thring's Montem, and the increasing popularity of the festival, which, in Dr. Hawtrey's words, made Eton on Montem day little better than Greenwich Fair, practically sealed its fate. After an ineffectual effort in 1844 to mitigate its worst evils, the authorities of the college decreed its suppression.

We have now followed Thring through his school-days. From the time when he went, at eight years of age, to Ilminster, to the period when, at nineteen, he left Eton as head of the collegers and captain of Montem, he had certainly tried the heights and depths of schoolboy life. His varied experience had left on his mind a profound impression, the results of which were to be developed in his subsequent career.

## CHAPTER III

### COLLEGE AND CURATE LIFE

1841-1853

MONTEM was celebrated, according to ancient custom, on Whit-Tuesday, which in 1841 fell upon June 12th. A week before, on June 5th, Thring had been formally enrolled as a scholar on the foundation of King's College, Cambridge, and he entered upon residence in October of the same year. Three years later, on June 5th, 1844, he became, in the regular course of succession, a fellow of King's. Altogether he was in residence at Cambridge as scholar and fellow for six years.

Of the undergraduate portion of his college career there is little record, save what is furnished by the college lists and by occasional references in his Diary and letters of later years. His private classical tutor at Cambridge was George Kennedy.

Under the system which prevailed at King's, Thring took his degree without university examination, and so could not be placed in any tripos. His tutor expressed the opinion that the place of first classic of his year at Cambridge would have lain between Thring and one other competitor.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1844 he obtained one of the highest distinctions of the University,

Writing in 1875 to an old pupil, Rev. A. H. Boucher, of his undergraduate life, he says :—

I think you were better off in your set than I was when I first came up. Nevertheless, on the whole, looking back at the time, I spent a very quiet, powerful three years at Cambridge, and can now think of it as one of the best periods of my life. In the turmoil of work afterwards the hours which had no other care but how to make the best of one's self in literary training come back with a very peaceful flavour.

And again :—

I never enjoyed any time more in my life than the two Longs I read at Cambridge. There is something particularly fascinating, so I thought, in the quiet, uninterrupted reading and perfect mastery over one's time. Some of my strolls about midnight in King's, in the summer night just before going to bed after work, still live in my memory ; so also do some of my walks.

He continued in residence three years after taking his degree and obtaining his fellowship.

These years of Cambridge life he described, in one of his public addresses, as “now heavy with labour, now buoyant with hope, bringing great searchings of heart, and much balancing of right and wrong, much anxious weighing of the value of education and life, and their true use.”

A pregnant sentence, which he speaks of as a prayer, remains to tell us one main drift of his thought at this the Porson Prize (for Greek iambics). He mentioned to a friend that for this prize he made sixteen distinct translations of the passage set (*Second Part of King Henry IV. Act IV. Scene vi. 93-117*) before deciding upon the final form his composition should take. His college prizes were—Glynn Prize in 1842 (awarded for learning and regularity of conduct); Latin Declamation in 1842, 1843, and 1844; Classics and Divinity in the annual examination, 1842 and 1843; Cooke Prize, 1844 (awarded “to those scholars who have deserved well by application to their studies and general orderly behaviour”).

time—of the dream and ideal of his own future which was forming in his mind : “Work till the end of my life, and life till the end of my work.”

This was the prayer, written out at Cambridge and preserved, into which the “searchings of heart,” of which he speaks, became crystallised. Never, surely, was prayer in both its alternatives more amply fulfilled.

A junior at Eton, who had followed him to college at an interval of some years, says of him at this time :—

When I came up to Cambridge he had nearly finished his course of reading. He had improved his scholarship by very determined hard work, the more creditable as his succession to a fellowship was a mere matter of course. . . . He was very enthusiastic over his classics, and had a high standard of morality and industry. I remember his telling me that an upright, steady character was in itself a silent rebuke of vice. He was rather out of spirits when I first saw him at King’s, as he had been working exceedingly hard without much encouragement or reward (King’s men did not then go in for the tripos), but almost directly he was cheered by gaining the Porson prize, much valued by scholars. But what seemed to me to cheer him most of all was when he made up his mind to be a clergyman. He was active and athletic, an extremely good “fives” player, full of energy in everything he undertook. I was rather afraid of him while I admired him.

At Cambridge he was already beginning to be recognised outside of his immediate college circle as a man of exceptional ability and force of character. Writing to him in 1868, Alexander Macmillan says :—

It is very nearly a quarter of a century since I first knew you, and since my dear brother and I used to speculate on the line in which you were to become eminent, for you were among

the first of Cambridge men whom his clear eye determined as fitted to do world work in one line or another.

Within the college the reforming instincts which were afterwards to carry him so far had already led him to take an active part in a struggle of much importance which was then going on.

Reference has been made to the anomaly which had long existed at Eton, whereby scholars were sent on from that school to college at King's, and to the enjoyment of valuable scholarships there, not by any special test of merit, but merely on the ground of seniority. The conditions under which King's College itself at that time carried on its work presented an anomaly even more extraordinary. By an agreement, dating from about the middle of the fifteenth century, between the university and the college, King's claimed for its scholars the privilege of exemption from the university examination for degrees. The only test submitted to by the men was one that satisfied their own college-tutors, who then presented them as a matter of right for the university degree. Hence the names of King's men never appeared in the class lists, and they were thus excluded entirely from the greatest object of university ambition at Cambridge, a high place among the wranglers of the year. Competition for a limited number of university scholarships or prizes was the only path to university distinction which offered itself, and for this naturally only a few of the ablest men would enter. The result was that the great majority of King's men took their degrees and passed on to the enjoyment of college fellowships without having undergone any university test.

Thring recognised clearly the temptations to idleness and the limitation to ambition thus imposed upon

King's men. While yet a fellow of the college he threw himself with great heartiness into the agitation to do away with this system, and wrote two vigorous pamphlets upon the subject ; the first in 1846, the second in 1848. New College, at Oxford, had lately abandoned a like privilege, and had sent its scholars into the schools in the ordinary way. Eton, too, had begun to reform its practice. "The College of Eton," he says, "has lately introduced a complete reform with regard to the succession to King's ; for whereas formerly the boys came up at random, the oldest, like cattle waiting to be fed, standing in the first rank—now the trials which decide their order are no longer a dead letter, as some have found to their cost ; but the most meritorious in a constant stream come up to Cambridge, in some cases only to stagnate there." The action of New College he quotes as an example for imitation ; the change at Eton as a guarantee, from the better class of men sent up, that King's need not fear the test of the university examinations. The true value of examinations is touched upon. "The College," he says, "has rejected that fair and open university trial, which, working on the sense of honour in the good and the sense of shame in the bad, infuses vitality into the mass on which tutors and lecturers are to act. . . . If the men are men of ability, they are (if left without examination) pent up in an unnatural stagnation ; if the contrary, they hold their station by an equally unnatural tenure." He dwells upon the duty of taking away all temptations to idleness in great foundations like King's which he describes as "charities without the sense of dependence ; men hold them as their own, yet as having a service to render for them ; that which they have received they are to pass on undiminished, if not

increased ; the dead have hired them for a wage to serve the living." An objection put forward by the opponents of any change was that as Eton and King's were strongholds of classical learning, their men would be at a disadvantage in an examination which required a certain amount of mathematical knowledge. On this point Thring writes to his mother in 1849 :—

I had a letter from King's yesterday, saying that they are going to make a great effort to separate the Classical and Mathematical Tripos, so that a person will not have to go in for mathematical honours before he can try for classical. I don't know when it will come on, but I shall go up and vote for it from any place and at any time. King's will be regularly stumped if the measure passes, their last excuse for idleness entirely cut away from them, to the great delight of many of us.

The arguments pressed by Thring and others were so completely successful, that when the question finally came up for decision in 1851, the vote of the Provost and fellows of King's was unanimous for relinquishing the anomalous privilege of their society. To the great and admitted benefit of their college, King's men have since that time submitted to the usual university tests.

Thring was ordained deacon in 1846, and priest in 1847. Soon after the first of these dates he accepted a curacy at St. James's Church, in the city of Gloucester. His vicar, Mr. Hedley, who died in 1855 at a comparatively early age, was a man of exceptional power and character. Thring often said that no other man had ever exercised so much influence over his thought. It was during this period at Gloucester that the intense religious convictions, the vivid conception of personal

relations to God, and the consecration of all his powers to God's service, which afterwards became the ruling motives of his life seem to have become definitely formed and fixed.] Writing to Mr. Hedley's daughter in 1871, after he had been eighteen years at Uppingham, he says :—

I can assure you no epoch of my life has made half the impression on me that my Gloucester stay and your dear father did. He of course was my great star, though I loved your mother too, but he was the most single-minded Christian I ever met, and wise and intellectual withal. He stamped himself deep on me ; much of my life here is indebted to him, how much I cannot tell. Night and day he is present in my prayers. I often think of him still, and love to look on this work as part his. You know partly what a great work I have been blessed to do here. Even outwardly it is very great, but in spirit I trust better still—a deep, true, unseen laying of foundations of better education.

Two letters from Mr. Hedley to Thring—one on his appointment to Uppingham, the other on his marriage, remain to throw light upon the relations between the two men, upon the nature of that influence over his life to which Thring so often alluded. They are the letters of a man who lived only for the things of the spirit ; who valued success and happiness for his friend only as they enlarged the sphere and willingness for Christian service ; who welcomed failure and suffering for himself and others, so that they drew the heart nearer to God. They explain and fully justify the reverent affection which Thring entertained for the writer.

Of Thring's directly religious work at Gloucester little can now be gleaned. It is interesting, however, to note that in later life at Uppingham he looked upon a clergyman's work in a parish as an excellent prepara-

tion for the duties of a schoolmaster. In appointing masters he frequently took this into consideration, giving the preference to men who had parish experience, or advising young men from the universities to get it before entering upon teaching duties. It gave, he thought, knowledge of the human heart and experience in dealing with various dispositions. "It keeps the heart open, and so makes the head sound," he writes to an old boy who was still at Cambridge. And again, to his Cambridge friend, Luard, he says :—

I am rejoiced to hear of your approaching ordination. Be sure my heartfelt prayers shall go up for you both now and then. I think you will find yourself much happier if you get in a good parish, and many a theoretical difficulty gets quite disposed of in good work by God's blessing, as one learns to see how in all times these (difficulties) have been much the same, and how little the practical object of evangelising a lost world has to do with the speculations which in the study appear all-engrossing. At least so it was to me, endeavouring to fix my heart steadfastly without personal feeling on what would promote or injure my work or usefulness.

But it was here at Gloucester, in the National Schools, that he began to teach, and in later life he always looked back upon this period as the very pivot upon which turned all his later educational work and thought.

Speaking of his career as a teacher in his inaugural address to the Education Society, of which he was chosen President in 1886, he said :—

But the curate life was the foundation of it all in practice. Never shall I forget it, with its teaching work, almost daily, in National Schools. Everything I most value of teaching thought, and teaching practice, and teaching experience, came from that. Never shall I forget those schools in the suburbs

of Gloucester, and their little class-room, with its solemn problem, no more difficult one in the world: how on earth the Cambridge honour man, with his success and his brain-world, was to get at the minds of those little labourers' sons, with their unfurnished heads, and no time to give.

They had to be got at, or—I had failed.

They tried all my patience, called every power into play, and visited me with much searchings of heart if they did not do well. Never shall I cease to be grateful to those impracticable, other-world boys, and that world of theirs which had to be got into. . . .

There I learnt the great secret of St. Augustine's golden key, which, though it be of gold, is useless unless it fits the wards of the lock. And I found the wards I had to fit, the wards of my lock which had to be opened, the minds of those little street boys, very queer and tortuous affairs; and I had to set about cutting and chipping myself in every way to try and make myself into the wooden key, which should have the one merit of a key, however common it might look, the merit of fitting the lock, and unlocking the minds, and opening the shut chambers of the heart.

Oh! how hard it was to get into shape, their shape, and fit the twists and corners of blocked and ignorant minds. But it was glorious work. There was wonderful freshness in those schools, a most exhilarating sense of life touching life, of freedom and reality, after the heaps of knowledge, which, like sheaves of corn on a threatening day, had had to be loaded up and carted in against time at school and college.

That the lowest teaching work requires the highest teaching skill is a truth which Thring was never tired of affirming. It was one he had learned from experience. He writes in 1883 to a teacher chiefly interested in elementary schools:—

I learnt my teaching in the National Schools in the parish of St. James, in the suburbs of Gloucester, where I was curate and used to take a class. In fact, the whole of my English Grammar up to moods is simply a verbatim sketch of

the lessons given in that class, in which I questioned all the ordinary grammar in and out of the little boys without their looking at a book, as any competent teacher can do in the same way. You may guess from this how thoroughly I agree with you in your aims.

It was not only in teaching the children of the National Schools that Thring's educational experience was being enlarged during the period of his life as a resident fellow at college and as a curate. His College appointed him one of the "posers" at Eton for four successive years—1850, 1851, 1852, and 1853. The University sent him as an examiner to Rugby. At Cambridge, in 1850, he was examiner for the classical tripos. After leaving Gloucester he read with private pupils for two years. Thus he was probing English teaching in various directions, and gaining an experience of schools and teaching methods which extended all the way from the top to the bottom of the educational scale.

He had thrown himself into the work of his curacy at Gloucester with the same vehemence of effort which characterised his later life. The strain proved too great, and a breakdown in his general health, the influence of which extended far into his school life, combined with serious throat weakness, made it necessary to take a year or more of entire rest. This enforced cessation of parish duties was at the time a bitter disappointment and trial. The work for which he had prayed was denied him. Unconsciously to himself the preparation for it was still going on.

I have before me a note descriptive of his life at Great Marlow, whither, after a short stay at Alford, he went to make a temporary home after leaving Gloucester. It is written by one who then met him for the first

time, became deeply interested in his character and career, and ever after remained a fast friend. The picture given of his energetic methods of taking relaxation is eminently characteristic. He devoted himself to his garden, made himself especially an expert at budding roses, and was full of eagerness to give instruction in this art to any one who was inclined to learn. "From his garden the cultivation of roses spread over the neighbourhood, and the effect on cottage gardens was very noticeable."

The love of dogs and other animals he derived from his youth at Alford, and the taste clung to him throughout life. "At Great Marlow his educational powers were exercised upon his dogs with surprising effect, and his patient training resulted in feats of intelligent obedience which interested and delighted his friends."

But what struck them most was the energy with which he devoted himself to the happiness of those around him. He would walk, ride, row, or do anything which contributed to their enjoyment ; he made their interests his own ; nothing seemed *small* to him. "Much self-control and training must have gone before to make him what he was in those early days," says this friend. "Manliness and courage are perhaps the two most prominent qualities with which one's mind recalls him, with unselfishness and steadfastness in his friendships. Probably it never occurred to anyone who knew him to doubt him, or to think that he could change." When a sympathetic listener was found, he talked with such entire unreserve and with such intensity of earnestness of his educational hopes and plans, that many who knew him then were quite prepared for what he afterwards accomplished in his chosen career.

At Great Marlow he spent in all two years, living

in what he describes as "a small pretty house, called Seymour Court." Some private reading with pupils was taken as his health began to improve, and on most Sundays he helped his friend, Mr. Powell, vicar of the neighbouring parish of Bisham, in preaching or in the other services of his Church. In 1851 he removed to Cookham Dene, a short distance away, in order to take the curacy of the small district of Stubbings, lately cut off from Bisham and Cookham Dene. Here he remained two years longer. The Vicar of Bisham remembers that at Stubbings he took the same great interest in the parish schools that he did at Gloucester.

It was during this period of partial disablement that he wrote his first work on English Grammar.

Meanwhile, both during his college career and later, he had been supplementing his work and studies by the education of foreign travel, on which he seems to have spent a portion of the money which he received as captain of Montem. In letters written to his mother vivid sketches remain of tours taken with his brothers or friends: one through Brittany and up the Loire; another up the Rhine to Switzerland, and through the more important parts of Germany; a third to Italy, where he spent several months in 1852. On this last occasion he had started from England with the intention of going from Italy to the Holy Land. But during the months that he spent at Rome he met the lady who was to be his future wife, became engaged, and under this new impulse, with characteristic impetuosity, changed all his plans, and returning to England, bent his thought entirely on getting work in the sphere to which his mind had been so long directed.

His friends wished him to take a mastership at Eton. The proposal for his appointment seems to have been

made in his absence, and it was opposed by some of those high in authority at his old school, who took exception to his "manner." Of this Eton criticism Thring writes from Rome to his friend Luard at Cambridge: "I wish most sincerely that my manner was much softer always, still I feel sure it has been positive rather than aggressive." Whether this distinction is correct or not, one scarcely wonders that an educational iconoclast, who had very strong convictions on school reform, and who never hesitated to express them, should have seemed a doubtful acquisition to many of the Eton men of that day. It is not clear that Thring himself ever seriously entertained the idea of going to Eton. When the offer was at length made to him it was declined, much to the disappointment of his father. Thring was manifestly anxious for an independent field of action.

Before going abroad in 1852 he had applied for the principalship of the Diocesan Training College for masters in the diocese of Oxford. On his return he thought for a time of a preparatory school for small boys. He applied for the mastership of the school at Durham, then vacant.

To Durham, in his new eagerness for employment, he went in person to press his application. He writes thence to Mr. Luard:—

I am here seeing canons, and trying for the school. I think I have a reasonable chance for it. My visits to the canons are by no means unsatisfactory, as if they are nothing else they are very pleasant people to talk to, and I can put my case quietly, and remove any little obstacles.

His name was one of two reserved from the list of applicants for the second day's scrutiny. On so slight

a thread hung for that day the fortunes of the little Midland school which he was to lift to eminence. The decision of the Durham Governors was in favour of Mr. Holden, then headmaster of Uppingham, who received the appointment. Thring at once applied for the post thus vacated, and after a short period of anxious waiting, was notified of his election.

He announces his appointment in a hurried letter to Cambridge on 1st September 1853, and nine days later he entered upon his work.

Before the end of the year, on 20th December, he was married to C. Marie Louise Koch, daughter of Karl Johann Koch, Counsellor, of His Prussian Majesty's Customs, Bonn on the Rhine. Thring aimed at creating a home life as well as a school life for his boys, and he was wont to attribute much of the character and success of Uppingham School to the ladies who shared the work of the masters. In his own household the loving sympathy and devotion brought into his life by his marriage, and the help of a powerful mind trained with German thoroughness to high educational ideals, were everything to him through the years of trial which he had to face. Many years afterwards he writes to an intimate friend, on his marriage:—"I can only say I have found my marriage the most perfect earthly blessing, beyond my lover's hopes even, and worth all. I trust you will too. The 'help meet for him.' There is the spell of happiness."

His marriage involved the resignation of his fellowship at King's. He writes to the Provost on 19th December:—

As to-morrow morning, before this letter is posted, I hope to be married, I beg to send in my resignation as fellow of King's College. On a review of the past, as I feel the

strongest affection for the royal places of my education, so I trust, as far as my powers went, they will acquit me of having failed them wilfully.

A sense of duty as well as affection kept up his interest in King's. Thirty years after the date of his resignation, in 1883, this note occurs in his Diary :—

Asked to preach at King's on the 27th. I do not like going to preach, but I have no choice. I have eaten King Henry's bread, and my services must be given whenever required, if it can be done.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BUILDING OF UPPINGHAM

1853-1859

THRING entered upon his headmastership of Uppingham school on 10th September 1853, when he was in the thirty-second year of his age.

A few days before, a friend had met him as he was returning from taking his first look at the place. To some casual question about his journey his reply was, "I think I have found my life-work to-day." That reply furnishes a keynote to his after career, and the explanation of his feeling in taking the appointment. Not as a stepping-stone to something else, but as a sole purpose in life, did he enter upon the work of a schoolmaster. Not as a post to be held till something better offered, but as a field for a life-long educational experiment, already clearly outlined in his mind, did he go to Uppingham. Thenceforward till the close of his life, thirty-four years later, that place was to be the centre of all his thought and effort. There he was to find the amplest realisation of the prayer into which at college he had concentrated his dream of life.

The field of work which he aimed at creating for himself—a great public school—is the best that Eng-

land offers for effective educational experiment and striking educational result. A few such schools have held a conspicuous place in English history, and have had immense influence on English life. It is not too much to say that, under the impulse given to it by a powerful headmaster, a great public school may, even in a generation, have a very perceptible influence in moulding the national character. Through it is constantly passing a stream of several hundreds of boys, who come from the better homes of the country, and go on to the universities and to professional life—to prominent positions at the Bar, in the Army, the Church, the Civil Service, the teaching profession, the higher organisations of commerce and industry. To influence public school life is therefore to modify the highest social and intellectual forces of the country. Such schools are expensive, and therefore limited in number ; the reaction of one upon another is great, even when least admitted ; and so to make a new and great public school on new principles could not fail to have a far-reaching effect. It is admitted that a school of this class, as it exists in England, offers the sphere in teaching life where individuality of character and vigour of policy in the teacher have the best opportunity of making themselves decisively felt. In the vast organised systems of popular education with which we are familiar in modern times, the individual teacher finds his efforts hedged in on all sides by official prescription of work and method. For his personal initiative little room is left. It is the just pride of the great English public schools that in them a headmaster is usually left comparatively free, save where tradition becomes his master, to do his work in his own way. It need scarcely be said that this fact places a premium on strong men as

headmasters, and also makes the positions tolerable to men of force and originality.

One circumstance especially gives a unique interest to the building of Uppingham. It was the realisation of a preconceived and carefully thought-out plan based on definite educational principles. I once asked Thring whether the structural and other ideas of the place had grown upon him as he advanced in his work. "No," he said emphatically, "among my papers I can show you the sketch, almost in detail, of everything I proposed to do, and which you now see here, just as I made it in the very first years of my mastership." The ideas which he had gleaned from his experience as a small boy at Ilminster, as oppidan and collegar at Eton, and as a student and fellow at Cambridge; from his later work as a poser at Eton, as examiner at Rugby and Cambridge, or from his training in the National Schools at Gloucester, had all, in the years before he went to Uppingham, been wrought out into definite form, and he began his work there with a fixed conception of what was necessary to be done—of the ideal school which he intended to create.

Let us glance for a moment at the surroundings of the place where his life-work was to be done, and the conditions under which it was begun.

Uppingham is a Midland market town, the centre of an agricultural district in Rutland, the smallest of English counties. The name indicates its elevated situation—500 feet above the level of the sea—a circumstance to which it owes a bracing, healthful air. To the south the high ground sinks away with undulations to the valley of the sluggish Welland, which winds like a thread through its broad meadows in summer, or covers them with wide lakes of quiet water when the spring or

autumn floods are out. In other directions, highways, pleasant to ramble along, lead through the ordinary Midland scenery, beautiful, but somewhat monotonous.

Beyond the school population, which comes with the opening terms, and for the most part flits—masters with their families as well as boys—in holiday time, the inhabitants do not number more than 2000. A sleepy little place it is when the school is away. Almost the only ripple in the local life is on market days, when the small square fills up with fat sheep and cattle, and the inns with sturdy farmers, butchers, or dealers. Railways approach on all sides, but did not, in Thring's time, reach it. The nearest stations—Manton, Gretton, and Seaton—were all four or five miles away,—an isolation inconvenient for the visitor in a hurry, but not without distinct advantage in the government of a large school.

The straggling principal street is picturesque in its way. The church boasts the pulpit from which Jeremy Taylor preached when he was the incumbent of the parish. Beyond this and apart from the school there is little of ancient historical tradition to dignify the little town, or give to boys' imaginations the impulse which schools like Eton or Winchester may well draw from their surroundings.

Take away from Uppingham as it is to-day the noble chapel and great schoolroom; the ivy-covered schoolhouses which lie along the High Street; the other handsome structures which, embowered in shrubbery and surrounded by gardens, are situated at intervals along the Rockingham and Stockerton roads; the baths, the sunny playing fields, the gymnasium, the cottage hospital fronting on Fairfield; the waterworks, which speak so eloquently to the initiated of sanitation

and well-flushed sewers, of a terrible danger and a great deliverance ; and we are able to realise what the little Midland town looked like when Thring first came to it in 1853, to enter almost single-handed upon his educational work. A picturesque but antiquated master's house, and an Elizabethan schoolroom, neither picturesque nor adapted to school needs, made up the existing school machinery. A part of this house, now used as a library, and the old schoolroom, transformed into a studio, still remain to remind Uppingham of its day of small things. A single assistant on the foundation, an under-master, and an "inefficient writing instructor," constituted his working staff. In some letter or paper he mentions that on first visiting Uppingham he "saw possibilities in the place." May we not think that the "possibilities" which he saw lay not so much in the place as in something reflected upon it from within the man himself?

And yet Uppingham was an ancient school. No one delighted more than Thring in dwelling upon the fact that there he had found a point from which to start ; that the school was no mere trade venture, but that he had built upon foundations long since laid by a good man as a deed of large-minded charity and love. Through all his after work this thought runs like a golden thread of inspiration. As far back as 1584 Robert Johnson, Archdeacon of Leicester, had, "by God's grace," to use the first words of the old statutes, founded at Uppingham a "faire, free grammar school." To it was attached a hospital for the maintenance of a number of poor men and women. A like school and hospital were at the same time founded at the neighbouring town of Oakham, to be controlled by the same Trust or governing body. The

founder mentions in the statutes that he has "in the said towns purchased certain lands, and also built certain houses for the habitations of my schoolmasters and wardens, ushers and sub-wardens, and poor men and women, and have also purchased divers hereditaments, revenues, and tenements, of the late Queen Elizabeth of famous memory, for the maintenance of my said schoolmasters, ushers, poor men, and certain poor scholars." To control the Trust thus constituted the archdeacon directed that there should be a Board of governors, of which his "right heir male" was to be hereditary "patron."<sup>1</sup>

He appointed to be members of the Board the Bishops of London and Peterborough, the Deans of Westminster and Peterborough, the Archdeacon of Northampton, and the Masters of Trinity and St. John's Colleges, Cambridge, with their successors in office from time to time. It does not appear, however, that these were expected to take any active share in the government of the Trust, as provision is made for their voting by written proxies only in the case of the election of headmaster.

The direct control was left almost entirely with the local governors, who were chosen, to complete the full number of twenty-four, under the following regulation of the statutes:—"When a place of governorship which is not successive falleth void, the governors then living shall choose either a knight, esquire, or gentleman, well known and reputed of by them who dwell in the diocese of Peterborough, or some minister whom they

<sup>1</sup> This provision of the founder's statutes was not interfered with when the new scheme came into operation under the direction of the Charity Commissioners in 1875, and A. C. Johnson, Esq., the then patron, continued to fill the place. At the tercentenary celebration in 1884, the hereditary patron was present and took the chair.

know to be a learned or pious man, a Master of Arts at least, and a parson or vicar within the diocese of Peterborough, in Rutland, or of my schoolmasters of Oakham and Uppingham." It will be observed that, with the exception of the *ex-officio* members, the governors were an entirely self-elected body.

The archdeacon appears to have himself preferred clergymen as governors, since his original nominations were all the incumbents of neighbouring parishes, together with his two schoolmasters (probably also clergymen) and two of his own grandchildren, "Isaac Johnson, Esq., and Samuel Johnson, Gentleman." The two latter were apparently the only laymen upon the Board.

In later times the list of governors was largely made up from the country gentlemen and noblemen of the diocese.

For 270 years the school thus founded and governed had kept on the even tenor of its way as a small county grammar school. Among its pupils were a few men who rose to prominence. The endowment, which produced, when Thring took the school in 1853, about £1000 per annum, furnished a small stipend (£150) to the headmaster; another (£130) to his principal assistant, and kept the schoolroom in repair, but it was chiefly devoted to the payment of scholars' exhibitions to the universities, and in this way, no doubt, the charity of the founder did much good in assisting struggling students to a university career. A portion of the fund was still given to the almsmen provided for under the Trust.

One more fact in connection with the composition of the Trust must be recalled in order to understand the difficulty of Thring's position. Archdeacon Johnson had provided for the joint government by the same Board of his two schools at Oakham and Uppingham.

These places are only six miles apart. The schools were intended to cover the same range of work, each taking boys of all ages and preparing them, if required, for the universities. Under such circumstances they naturally came into rivalry. In the centuries during which the Trust had been in operation the very moderate fortunes of the two schools had alternately fluctuated. It had become proverbial in the county that when one was up the other was down. With a Board drawn about equally from the neighbourhood of the two localities, nothing was more natural than that the squires and clergymen of each should watch jealously that no special preference was given to the other.

Nor was this all. A purely agricultural community, dominated by a few large landowners—country squires and conservative noblemen—scarcely furnishes a soil in which we expect new and progressive ideas to rapidly and easily take root. Of the country clergy on the Board, with their keener interest in things intellectual, something more in the way of hearty support might have been expected.

None of these, however, seems in earlier days to have had much weight in the counsels of the Trust, save one, who was Rector of Uppingham and Chancellor of the diocese of Peterborough. There is reason to think that the Chancellor, who was a man of intellect, was also of an ambition which led him to look with distinct antagonism on the growth beside him of a great school power which threatened to overshadow his own parochial influence.

It was a strange chance which brought it about that an enthusiast like Thring, burning with a zeal which had been gathering strength for years, his imagination filled with a large plan for the bettering

of education, his iron will bent on its accomplishment—ready to risk credit, health, life itself to gain his ends—should have to enter upon his work under a governing body of this kind, which, far from entering with sympathy into his views, looked for years with suspicion and distrust upon every forward step, and even offered passive, if not active, resistance to the working out of his ideas. The evidence that this was for a long time the attitude of a majority of the members seems complete.

Against the inertia of this body Thring's passionate earnestness and restless energy never ceased to chafe. While he felt that he was staking his life and fortunes for a great and holy cause, they thought and not seldom said that he was gambling with the money that he and others had invested in the school.

Again, had he possessed a considerable fortune to expend upon his experiment, or had he had at his disposal large sums of money, such as have been given for the foundation of many modern schools, the attempt to which he from the first inwardly pledged himself would seem less audacious than it now appears to us. But all these conditions were wanting. He was a younger son, and could only look forward to deriving from the family estate the small portion of a younger son,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thring always held, however, that the benefits derived from the law of primogeniture outweighed its disadvantages. "Much of the best work of England," he once said to me, "has been done by the younger sons of good families because they were younger sons. To us (speaking of his own family) it proved an almost unmixed good. After our school and college life we younger brothers were thrown out upon the world to win our own way. Education and instinct alike pledged us to use every effort to maintain the credit of the family and the old home. That home, meanwhile, was being kept together as a centre of the family life, and to it we could all return from time to time. In influences such as this lies one of the secrets of England's achievements."

upon which, meanwhile, as long as his father lived, he had no claim. His family, indeed, had little sympathy with his ideas, and scant faith in the enterprise upon which he was entering.

It was under these circumstances that Thring, practically single-handed, undertook and carried out the work of establishing a great public school. In doing so he had to enter the lists against the old and rich foundations, like Eton and Winchester, Harrow and Shrewsbury, with their centuries of tradition and long-established connection. At about the same time, also, more than one foundation was being started, backed by munificent gifts of money or powerful social influence.

Only a few miles distant from Uppingham was Rugby, then at the height of its reputation, and with the memory of its greatest headmaster still fresh around it.

Against such competition he could only match an intense conviction that in fundamental particulars public school life had nowhere yet in England been established on any system educationally true in principle, and so capable of general application by average workers under average conditions. It was to framing such a system and securing for it recognition that he consecrated his life. So far as ambition entered his thoughts it was to leave behind some "constructive memorial" of his conceptions of educational truth.

"A school," he writes in 1859, "may enshrine the individual in their hearts, but it ought to have a monument of him in his system. There are times when a man must build his ship as well as be able to command her. It may dazzle men more to watch a great man's success under adverse circumstances, but it benefits society more to have a good

strong system set on foot which any average honest man can work."

He wished to establish a school based on true principles. But in his mind these principles themselves rested upon and grew out of what can only be described as a passionate conviction that education was, in a special sense, a work for God. No one can gauge Edward Thring's work and character unless he understands the supreme influence of this belief on his life. From the time when he came to Uppingham a young and perhaps over-confident enthusiast, through years of work and weariness, of mingled success and disappointment, to the day thirty-four years later when, suddenly stricken, he turned away a dying man from the altar of his noble chapel with the words of the communion service upon his lips, this thought that he was doing a work for God, and under His immediate eye, never forsook him. In every crisis of an anxious life it was the central and sustaining thought which gave new courage. It was marked by the fixed habit of always devoting a moment to private prayer before leaving his study to go to his first morning class. It shone out in the morning Scripture lessons to his sixth form, recalled by many a pupil as memorable in the awakening they gave to higher views of Christian life. It appears on every page of the Diary, written almost daily for well-nigh thirty years of his school career. Here every note of true work accomplished, every step in school progress has, in Greek, or Latin, or English, its brief ascription of praise to God, as to every beginning of work he gave its dedication of prayer. Not only did the thought run through his school sermons, as might have been expected, but it also gave a solemn earnestness to his ordinary talk on school questions.

This feeling, indeed, that in training young lives he was doing a special and direct work for God dominated his own life and all his views of school life. It gave him his starting-point for practical work.

“Thrинг was the most Christian man of this generation,” was a remark made to me in the House of Commons soon after his death by a well-known public man. One was curious to know the genesis of a thought that seemed to savour of exaggeration. “Because,” he went on to explain, “he was the first man in England to assert openly that in the economy of God’s world a dull boy had as much right to have his power, such as it is, fully trained as a boy of talent, and that no school did honest work which did not recognise this truth as the basis of its working arrangements.” This was in effect the essential element in his school beliefs. It is the best starting-point for any discussion of the ends he had in view.

Two extracts will serve to illustrate his position in theory and practice. The first is from a paper written at an early stage of his school career:—

Englishmen say they are fond of facts. . . . Here is a fact of the greatest importance: Englishmen of the upper classes send away their children from home to be educated by strangers. No theory which does not distinctly recognise this fact to begin with is of any value in England. No practice which does not thoroughly and fairly meet this fact ought to find acceptance from the practical English mind. Children leave home to go to school. In theory they are sent to a place which is better than home, to be under men who train better than fathers and mothers. This is a large demand. . . . A place better than home; there is much in this—men better than father and mother as trainers; there is much in this. Of course one obvious “better” is at once seen. The children require lessons and skilled teaching, and

few homes can give this. But whole nations—Germany, for instance—bring skilled teaching within reach of all homes. The English school in all instances started in early days as a local school, and has been pushed out of this by the judgment of the English people. . . . This teaching want, therefore, clearly can have little to do with the present fact. England has not chosen to have its education carried on at home, but deliberately prefers, when it can be had, a boarding-school. Accordingly the mere teaching . . . does not satisfy the better-than-home claim. For the teaching might be had and the home kept. . . . The difference between merely teaching, and teaching and training, is simply immeasurable. The introduction of the training element at once makes a different world. This different world, if it is truly adapted to its purpose, demands, indeed, to begin with, everything that the other does, with the addition of everything necessary to provide for the whole life of every boy in and out of doors on the best training principles. It will simplify every school question to get rid at once of the idea that the actual teaching and knowledge part of the matter is the main thing from the English point of view. . . . The decision has been made and is a fact. The wealthy English neither bring teaching to their houses which they might do, nor go into the towns for it which they might do, nor found schools on this plan which they might do. . . . As a fact beyond dispute, Englishmen of the upper classes send their children from home, and *the reason why they are sent from home* is not the teaching. . . . This at once brings us to the necessary conditions of a boarding-school as a place of training. It must be better than home. But every boy comes from a home, and a thousand families do not want, if they understand their wants, 10 per cent of their 1000 boys to be turned out brilliant knowledge caskets and prize-winners, while 90 per cent take their chance. The class list does not satisfy the training demand for each boy at all. . . . Every boy who leaves home ought to go to a better than home place. . . . It is an absolute necessity in training, a self-evident truth, that every boy, whatever his abilities may be, should be intelligently cared for and feel that he is so cared for.

Again, in a statement made to the trustees of the school in 1875, when his theories had been thoroughly worked out in practice, and had been crowned with success, he says :—

The two main facts on which the present school has been built up are very simple and easily stated.

They are these two truths: Firstly, the necessity in a true school that every boy, be he clever or stupid, must have proper individual attention paid to him. If he has not, the boy who has not, so far as he is neglected, is not at school. Secondly, that proper machinery for work, proper tools of all sorts, are at least as necessary in making a boy take a given shape, as in making a deal box.

Out of these two axioms the present school of Uppingham has grown by a necessary process of reasoning and practical business.

Let it be said at once that these two truths, if accepted as axiomatic and fundamental, meant revolution in all the well-known schools of Thring's time. When understood they are seen to fix the ideal towards which schools have since been slowly moving under the compulsion of public opinion without or reforming energy within, but which even now comparatively few have reached. They furnish, it may fairly be claimed, the ideal towards which further movement in structure and organisation should be directed.

The facts with which his school experience had made him familiar will best illustrate the lines of his reforming work. The conditions which prevailed at Eton have already been referred to. The barrack life of the Long Chamber, with its seventy or eighty boys left practically without supervision or the possibility of comfortable life, was no doubt its worst feature in the matter of residence; and the headmaster's classes of 200, which reformation had only reduced to 100,

the worst in point of teaching. But the ordinary houses for oppidan residence had numbers so unwieldy, the class-rooms and tutor-rooms were so crowded, that due attention to each boy was a practical impossibility, and was scarcely attempted. If we turn from the extreme case of Eton to the school where reform was then believed to have done its utmost the facts are still such as to arrest attention. We are told that in the headmaster's house at Rugby there were between sixty and seventy boys.

Of the class-rooms during about the same period we have the following account by the late Dr. C. H. Pearson in the *Contemporary Review* for August 1893 :—

I remember three forms at Rugby that averaged sixty pupils to the master, and these forms came one above the other in the school course, and took the boys in the important years between twelve and fifteen. Naturally the masters, who were conscientious men, were grievously overworked, but the finances of the school did not allow of their numbers being supplemented.

Thring believed that conditions such as these made truth in school training impossible, and that out of them inevitably grew what he regarded as perhaps the greatest heresy against educational truth ever expressed, viz. that "the first, second, and third duty of a school-master is to get rid of unpromising subjects." Not that he doubted the sincerity and the good intention of any master of a public school who took this view. But to leave in a system structural defects which compelled neglect, made individual care of all boys in the house and individual training in the schoolroom impossible for even the ablest and most conscientious teachers, and then by dismissal to get rid of the failures

created by such impossible conditions, seemed to him a flagrant defiance of justice and common sense. Bad conditions might make the policy of dismissal a temporary necessity, but statesmanship in school life would aim primarily at changing the bad conditions to good.

To the argument mentioned by Dr. Pearson, that able men can even now be adequately paid at the great schools only when class-rooms are overcrowded and boarding-houses large, his answer was ready. Either parents should pay fees sufficient to provide for the training of each boy, or they should be frankly warned that the school could not undertake to give it. Truth, he said, cannot be taught to boys where truth is not the practice of the school. But he himself firmly believed that schools could exist which make justice and a fair chance for each boy the very corner stone of their system. To prove this in practice was the task to which he addressed himself.

After the ordinary system of country grammar schools of its class, when Thring came to Uppingham, the headmaster alone was allowed to take boarders. One common and obvious method by which an able and energetic man could hope to draw large pecuniary advantage from a position of the kind, was to retain this boarding monopoly, enlarge his house as the numbers of pupils increased under vigorous administration, and employ unmarried and more or less temporary masters, who can always be obtained at low salaries, to share the teaching work. Very large incomes have been made and are now being made by headmasters out of schools managed in this way. But it was repugnant to every educational principle that Thring had in his mind. He had conceived a system which

he believed to be the only one on which perfectly true and honest public school education could be carried on, and he was bent on creating a great school which should serve as a permanent illustration of certain clearly-defined principles.

The main features of this system can be easily stated. In the first place, there was to be no barrack life, with its barrack discipline and the lack of individual care which were the necessary result of excessive numbers congregated in a single house. Much observation and thought upon the point had led him to conclude that about thirty boys were all that could be adequately dealt with in one house. This original opinion was ratified by many years of practical experience, and to the end of his life he saw no reason to change this maximum. With thirty boys, a master and his wife were not over-matched by numbers, could make their houses home-like, and could know intimately and therefore influence the individual boy. The care of the individual was thus secured, but another immediate and important result of this limitation of the numbers permitted in a house is, that it secures for the school the largest possible proportion of masters who are not birds of passage, but having homes in the school are permanently interested in its success, and have the strongest inducements to make teaching a fixed profession.

This point he deemed fundamental.

"The first great distinction," he said, in a statement made to the governors in 1859, "between a first-class and second-class school is this, whether there exists a permanent staff of masters or not; this is the test of the class to which a school belongs; without this, no other advantage can lift a school into first-class rank.

"These masters ought, also, to have incomes dependent on their own exertions, and not to be paid fixed salaries.

"The number of boys apportioned to each master must not exceed his ability to teach—that is, pay individual attention to, not simply deal with in classes. Every boy must feel himself known if either affection, truth, honour, or intellect, or intellectual progress are to have fair play."

Next to the number of boys, therefore, who can be efficiently cared for and managed in a house comes the question of how many can be efficiently taught in a class. On this point his view was equally definite. He held that in a great public school, doing the classical and other work which prepares for the university, from twenty to twenty-five boys were all that could be taught in a single class if adequate attention were to be given to each.

Nor should a class fall much below this limit, since competition and the interest of numbers are necessary to the greatest efficiency. It need scarcely be said that this judgment, new in practice and hardly ventured upon even in theory in his time, has now the endorsement of all teachers of weight.

The settlement of the numbers which could be adequately taught in a class led him on by a natural process of reasoning to a further important conclusion.

He held that the limit of numbers in a first-rate public school training boys for the university could be almost as rigidly determined, if sound principles were adhered to, as the limit of numbers in a house. Ten or eleven houses with thirty boys apiece constituted the maximum beyond which it was not wise to go; any considerable drop beneath this number was also at the expense of efficiency. With this maximum of boys, a staff of house masters, strengthened by additional

masters for special subjects, could deal. A sufficient number of classes could be arranged to secure easy upward movement in the school for the number of years during which boys usually remain. No class was too large to interfere with individual training, while each was large enough to give the necessary stimulus of competition. The moment that a school rose above this number the classes became overweighted, and the work proportionally inefficient up to the point where the staff could be doubled, and a system of parallel classes established from the top to the bottom of the school. But against a school thus doubled or trebled in size the objections were fatal. The following statement, made in reply to a request for an opinion as to the comparative working efficiency of a school with 500 boys, and one with 1000, will show his point of view on this last question :—

It is certain that a school which undertakes to work each boy cannot be in a true state of efficiency if its numbers exceed 400 boys, and for the highest average excellence that is too much.

The numbers that a headmaster can know personally form no slight item of calculation in a question of efficiency.

As long as the headmaster knows every boy he is headmaster ; the moment he does not, the man who does is so far headmaster. The working of this is not unimportant. If a headmaster does not know each boy, and is unable to give an opinion on each boy, his assistant master B comes before him with a complaint of a boy C, whom he does not know. The headmaster has no choice ; he must take B's opinion as final, and act on it. In other words, the headmaster sinks into the position of B's policeman ; B is entirely independent of the headmaster in his treatment of boys, and knows it. This makes B an autocrat in his own class, and breaks up the school into a number of small sections. The effect of this is that as no unity is possible, the individual masters are in a great degree free from restraint ; and great laxity of discipline

and great unevenness of treatment is the result. The boys cease to expect uniformity ; the masters drop into slack habits, or are martinets, according to their disposition ; charges of favouritism are rife, and punishments are set according to individual caprice. All real organisation is gone. I attribute in no small degree the efficiency of this school to the fact that no serious punishment is ever inflicted without consultation—the headmaster, house master, and class master always discussing the matter. Every master always works and acts with the consciousness that his whole system and the application of it to individual boys has to meet the judgment of the headmaster, and that the headmaster knows the boys that have to be dealt with, and that his colleagues are also often called in to give an opinion.

I consider these facts alone to be in practice fatal to the thorough efficiency of a too large school.

There is no hard and fast line, but each boy added to the numbers over about 330 or 340 begins to act as a drag. Whereas every boy added to the numbers up to about 330 adds to the efficiency of a school, by securing a sufficient graduation of classes and a sufficient number for the training of the outdoor life.

Therefore I need scarcely say that there is no choice, in my judgment, between two schools for 500 each and one for 1000. The two schools alone are worthy of the name of schools, and are alone capable of doing school work. . . . There are no principles more definite than the principles which determine that an efficient school must not pass certain boundaries in the matter of numbers.

In addition to the limitation put upon numbers in a single house, Thring found in the structure of the houses themselves means to combat the evils of the barrack system of schools of which he had seen so much in his own boyhood. In building his boarding-houses, he provided not only that each boy should have a separate cubicle in the dormitories, but also a small study, from which other boys were excluded

except by special permission, and which thus became a little castle of his own. The suggestion of the individual study Thring seems to have found in the picturesque old schoolhouse quadrangle, but with intuitive perception of strategic advantage, he seized the hint and developed it into a working principle. In these studies each lad had a refuge for quiet work or thought. Thus while each house gave its inmates a substitute for home life, the independent study gave a boy an opportunity for a degree of private life as well. Thring believed that this much could be secured for the individual boy without sacrificing any essential part of that hardy training in a large boy republic which is the distinctive mark of the English public schools, and which has been the great secret of their success in preparing men for the actual business of life. No man ever valued this public training more than he did ; but he knew its dangers too. He knew that sensitive natures are often cowed or crushed by being left entirely at the mercy of a mob of thoughtless schoolfellows ; that even for the strongest a certain degree of privacy has its moral and intellectual advantages.

Difficult as was the task before him of building, without means, and with but one boarding-house and an insufficient class-room to start from, Thring was at least happy in this, that he had no great structural mistakes of the past to get rid of. In noble architecture he delighted, but he never envied schools which possessed stately piles of buildings designed for architectural effect, but with no reference to the training of boys. He saw clearly how often able men's work was hampered by defects of external structure. The thought with which he began was that every brick put in place in a school, every plot of ground laid out,

should be so disposed as to assist in making it easy to do right and hard to do wrong. That structure should lend itself to the master's work, and not thwart it ; that nothing should be left for men to do which could be done by machinery, he held to be essential.

"The almighty wall," was the terse phrase into which he condensed the thought that structure, over any long period of years, is a final arbiter of schools, by its steady pressure elevating or lowering the life within.

But to secure training for each boy other questions than the structure of houses, the limitation of numbers in the house, the class-room, or the school, must be considered. A great school has to deal with a wide variety of tastes and capacities. "Every boy can do something well," Thring used to say. A good school which aims at making the most of each boy should be prepared to give opportunities in many directions. A boy who cannot hold his own in purely literary work may command the respect of his fellows, and, what is even more important for healthy growth, may maintain his own self-respect on other lines of effort.

Games were a matter of course, and on them he laid great stress, aiming at as perfect an equipment as possible in cricket and football grounds and fives courts. It seems strange, in the light of present practice, to find that the gymnasium opened in 1859, and the gymnastic master put in charge of it, were the first possessed by any public school in England. A carpentry and a shop for metal work, each with skilled instructors, a garden where plots were assigned to pupils, and swimming baths, in default of any convenient natural bathing-place, were among the other appliances which, sooner or later, he adopted to carry out his general

idea of giving variety of interest or useful training in leisure hours.

On a higher level, and at the time more singular as an innovation, was his introduction of music as a regular part of public school training.

This must be spoken of at greater length in another place. But a fully employed staff of seven highly-trained music masters, whom he lived to see at work in the school, bore witness to the success of his experiment; the fact that the subject has now a recognised place in the majority of the great schools shows the far-reaching influence of the example.

Thus far his plans looked mainly to the welfare of the unit in the school. But they had another aspect and direction.

The peculiar influence of the English public school in moulding character depends in no small degree on a singularly subtle, but also singularly powerful sense of unity which gradually comes to pervade the school community. A long history and its traditions, common worship, common discipline in work and sport, the close contact which comes of common residence, similarity for the most part of social sympathies, common successes or failures in contests intellectual and athletic—all these seem to be factors in generating among the boys this strong sense of a united school spirit. To the strengthening of this feeling, with its silent but powerful compulsion on the character, mind, and manner of the individual, Thring attached the greatest importance. So while he planned the domestic and teaching machinery with a special view to the training of each boy, he knew well that a great school must have the appliances for collective treatment. Chief among these were a school chapel for common religious services, and a speech-room

or large school-room where the whole body could meet, and thus be made conscious of their common life, on public occasions. From the very first these large and expensive buildings were included in his plans.

From what has been said, it can now be understood what was the constructive work, to speak of brick and mortar alone, which Thring had outlined, not merely in his mind or in conversation with friends, but on paper, when he set himself the task of constructing a school which would satisfy what he conceived to be true principles of education. It has seemed best to make this clear first of all that the after struggle may be the better understood. After his end was gained there was a disposition to look upon the rise of Uppingham as something parallel with that of other schools, and to accept it as in the natural order of events. But the friends of those early days speak of the utter incredulity with which they heard Thring unfold his plans ; of the surprise they felt when his splendid audacity, without a parallel, so far as I know, in the history of English public schools, began gradually to be crowned with success.

He himself, however, had as yet little idea of the long and painful path he would have to tread in working out his plans. "Yes, I have a work before me," he said to an old Eton friend a day or two after his appointment, "but you know, my dear fellow, self-confidence is not a deficiency in the Thring family." That self-confidence was to receive many a rude shock, but behind it were a pluck and persistent faith which gave it final justification.

He had been nearly five years at Uppingham, and had passed through the most severe crisis of his early struggles, when a friend, struck by what he saw at the

school, and impressed by the headmaster's plans for the future, suggested that some record ought to be made of a constructive work so important. Acting on this suggestion Thring began, as he says, "to put down some memorials of the events connected with this great educational experiment and its success, before I have forgotten the struggle and its bitterness, and from day to day to note down such circumstances as may be likely to be useful in time to come."

The brief retrospect of the first five years, with which the Diary begins, is the chief clue that remains to the events of this first period. He begins to note down his recollections in December 1858 :—

On the 10th September 1853, I entered on my headmastership with the very appropriate initiation of a whole holiday and a cricket match, in which, I recollect, I got 15 by some good swinging hits, to the great delight of my few pupils. . . . The Trust had allowed the previous headmaster to vacate his post a month before. The school was in full operation, if a small rebellion deserves the name. . . . I found myself in an unfurnished house; my own bed, and a table and a few chairs literally the only things left; two boxes of books of my own were all the things I had time to bring. A set of troublesome servants, all of whom in the course of the year I dismissed. I was alone, not being yet married; very far from well . . . and thus without books, servants, or furniture, had at once to enter on a new school, and make a start. There were only twenty-five boys, mostly old, waiting for the exhibitions, my predecessor having taken to Durham eleven of the younger ones. And so the work began. There was one master, Mr. Earle, on the foundation here, and one salaried under-master—a very good fellow, but not up to his work—with an inefficient writing-master. I dragged through the dreary months as I best could till Christmas, changing the school work a little, and putting the domestic status of the boys on a better footing somewhat, but little could be done then. Two things, however, were very evident: that there never would be any good work

as long as the system of a headmaster unsupported was continued ; and, secondly, that the foundation was worthy of better things. I determined at once, in my own heart, to begin the present work, to give up the exclusive right to boarders, to engage by degrees able men, to limit them and myself, in number, so as to be able really to educate our pupils, and I felt confident that if the work was blessed there would be no want of numbers in time. I kept this to myself, as I should have been set down as mad if I had disclosed my real views, and I knew that nothing but this success could by any possibility remunerate me for the change. But my trust was in God and that it was His work. Alas ! I was yet to find out that though theoretically I admitted this, yet practically I was too ready to worship my nets ; believed that to get good men with high degrees would make a good school, and was in great danger of becoming self-confident and shallow in work.

During the first two years, though the growth of the school was very slow, he appointed three new masters, in each case personally guaranteeing a large part of their salary. But he soon found himself in difficulties which would have broken the courage of a weaker man. The appointment of a colleague, who had come to him highly recommended, and of whom he had hoped much, proved a bitter disappointment, and "brought everything to the brink of ruin" ; entries fell off ; the guarantees of salaries which he had undertaken fell upon him with crushing weight, and he began to be involved in debts which weighed him down for years. "Well did I learn," he says, "the lesson which he was sent to teach me—not to trust to human means. With many bitter tears, and weary days of pain of body and heart, almost in my heart's blood were the foundations of this school laid—almost out of my grave in that prolonged agony."

A statement made in 1857 of the debts he had

incurred for the school throws light upon this strength of language. They then amounted to £2680.

His intense earnestness, however, and his faith in the cause to which he had committed himself, soon began to kindle enthusiasm in other men. Foremost among these was the Rev. J. H. Hodgkinson, who was appointed to a mastership in 1855.

"I must record," Thring says, "my great obligations to Mr. Hodgkinson, without whose liberal, faithful efforts all would have perished. . . . At that time of difficulty and deep pecuniary embarrassment he threw his whole patrimony into the scale, set up a first-rate house . . . risked his all, in fact, in faith on the principles on which the work was set on foot, and by so doing prevented everything from collapsing, as it must have done."

Another man to whom Thring always expressed deep gratitude for his faith, sacrifice, and loyal help in this time of crisis was his old Eton friend, Rev. J. Baverstock, who joined him a little later. These two adhesions seem to have turned the tide of battle which was running against him, and gave him the courage to go on. A few years later, as will be seen, another old Eton and Cambridge friend, Rev. J. Witts, threw himself into the work with a courage and liberality which gave a great impulse to the growth of the school. The second master whom he found at the school, Rev. Wm. Earle, for some years hesitated to fall in with Thring's plans, and he records that "it was not until after Christmas, 1857, that I succeeded in gaining him over as a friend and fellow-worker." "One of the most pleasing circumstances that has occurred since my taking office," he remarks of this event. Thus he was drawing to his side the men who knew him best and recognised the spirit of his work.

For some time the growth of the school was slow. There were twenty-eight boarders at Christmas 1853 ; at Christmas 1854 there were forty-six. Already Thring felt a singular confidence in the ultimate success of his large plan, and one of his chief objects was to get the Trust to take some interest in the growth of the school.

He writes to General Johnson, the hereditary patron, in 1855 :—

I am sure, sir, from the fruits we are already reaping, that should it please God to bless us with health and strength a few years will make this school rank among the best of England. The numbers in the two years I have been here will probably more than double themselves, and by the system of first-rate and permanent under-masters taking boarders, there is a power of expansion to any desirable limit . . . I confess to being desirous to obtain some tangible acknowledgment from the Trust of having been painful in my post, and of their interest in the progress of the work—some definite proof that may be a sort of Victoria Cross to us, if nothing more.

But the Trust had no such inclination. The chief obstacle lay in the relations of Oakham and Uppingham. Thring saw clearly that the two schools could not prosper side by side if doing the same kind of work, *i.e.* preparing pupils for the universities. He therefore proposed a plan by which this work should be reserved for Uppingham, while Oakham should be put on an efficient basis as a preparatory school. This plan was doubtless a good one, since it received the approval of the headmaster of Oakham, who joined with Thring in recommending it to the governors. So far, however, from accepting this proposal, the Trust seems to have spent a large sum in rebuilding at Oakham as an offset to the push which Uppingham

had received from private hands. The following letter from the patron, written in connection with this proposal, shows the nature of the local hostility which Thring had to confront:—

GENERAL JOHNSON TO REV. E. THRING.

1856.

If I understand your wish and intention rightly, it is to make Uppingham a first-class and more extended school, and Oakham a second or minor one. Now, my dear sir, suppose you were to succeed in the first of these objects, which you appear to have every prospect of doing, you will never be able to obtain the governors' sanction to such a distinction. You are not aware of the very strong local feeling not only of the governors, but of the two towns of Oakham and Uppingham, and of the jealousy that has always existed between them. I do not think either the governors of the Trust or Charity Estate, or the inhabitants of the county at large, are very anxious for a further extension of either school than the locality so clearly defined by the statutes.

REV. E. THRING TO GENERAL JOHNSON.

February 7th, 1856.

I am, unhappily, only too well aware of the difficulty of moving any body of men not practically engaged or interested. For many years it was my lot to be occupied at King's College, Cambridge, in the endeavour which finally triumphed to put the statutes on a better working footing. The fact is, in these days, unless this is done, an external power which none of us will like will come and settle matters with a high hand, for the present practice is very wide from the statutes. However, as regards myself the case is quite different. No responsibility rests with me as it partially did at King's, and though I could not bear to see this noble foundation wasted and imperfect without laying the case before the proper authorities, having done so it is no duty of mine to agitate further unless encouraged to do so. The responsibility of the use or abuse of such high powers does not touch me, and I think it would

even be wrong in me to move beyond a certain point. But it certainly is my duty, as one of the two main workers of the Trust, not to withhold a working plan at this critical moment when such lasting interests are at stake. . . .

With respect to the money spent here which you so kindly mention, I can assure you it has been laid out on no hypothesis that the Board will give any help, though I shall not easily believe that the first gentlemen of this county take no intelligent interest in the great Charity, and the mere hearty support of such a body of men in the county would at once decide the question of success in our favour. What we have done is based on the necessities of a good school which is not preparatory. I boldly affirm, whatever appearances may be, that there cannot exist a school first-rate in its work excepting on the basis on which this is now established.

Immediately I was appointed headmaster here, I saw at once that this noble foundation had never been worked as it deserved. For the old system, under which the headmaster engrossed all the boarders, merely paying low salaries to a changing cycle of assistants, was manifestly an imposture, more or less, as the lower part of the school never could be properly educated, and also, as all depended on the headmaster, there could be no permanence, since the character of the school must vary according to its change of head *entirely*. I at once determined slowly to alter this. . . . I gave up all boarders, excepting thirty-two (there have been lately as many as fifty or sixty); sent to my friends at Cambridge; guaranteed £250 per annum to a first-rate man, handing over to him the rest of the boarders, with permission to take thirty. . . . I also engaged Herr Schafer at a guarantee of about £120 per annum as a German master, and on my numbers rising, have again engaged on the same terms Mr. Hodgkinson, an experienced teacher, for my lower classes. My guarantees therefore, including Mr. Clarke, and exclusive of Mr. Earle's salary, are not less than £670 per annum, some of which is perpetual, and all must return but slowly, besides the great negative loss of so many boarders. I trusted by these means, as time went on, to make the school worthy of its noble foundation, and when I had surrounded myself with a permanent staff of first-rate men and flourishing school, that

the governors would not be unwilling to meet any proposals we might make, or the public to support us. I have said nothing of the sum of money I have spent in improving the school premises.

I think, sir, if you visited my buildings you would consider that I had been at no slight expense, and that the improvements were very great.

Coldness and opposition could not stop the growth of the school. The numbers increased rapidly under the impulse of the new spirit brought into the place. The governors, however, were still strangely indifferent to its progress. In 1858 the need for a school chapel had become pressing. In that year he writes to General Johnson :—

To GENERAL JOHNSON.

*Sunday night, August 22nd, 1858.*

This evening has brought before my eyes more strongly than ever the very urgent pressure we are suffering under from want of a chapel. . . . The hall to-night, crowded as it was, barely held us at all—boys and masters numbering 126, exclusive of day scholars, and more are coming at the quarter. . . . This week has been warm, and boys have fainted three times. . . . Really, sir, I am very sorry to trouble you, but this is no theory. If any governor will come over and be present, especially if the morning is warm, he will have evidence of a fact in this public school requiring to be dealt with at once. . . . All our private requirements both for boarding and tuition we have met and are meeting. We are furnishing even school-rooms whenever rented, but at this present moment we cannot build a chapel, or it would have been up by this time, without at least a guarantee from the Trust, and nevertheless we cannot conduct the school properly without one. Our Sunday worship (in the parish church) is a scandal. . . . The question is very pressing. If the chapel was begun to-day and carried on with all possible speed, I see clearly it would not be finished in time to prevent a temporary cessation of some of our most im-

portant work. When the history of the present rise and establishment of the school comes to be written, as it surely will be, if it lasts, these circumstances will scarcely be credited.

These first attempts to win the support of the Trust had little success. The gallery of the parish church had at first met the needs of the school for Sunday services. When that was outgrown the use of the church for separate morning and afternoon services for the school was obtained. Leave for this seems to have been granted somewhat unwillingly, and so the building of a school chapel became an urgent necessity. He thus describes his application for assistance to the governors :—

At the June audit (1858) I laid before the Trust plans for a chapel, as the school had outgrown the parish church, with a guarantee pinned to it of £500, signed by all the masters. The Trust left the plans and guarantee on the table, and gave no answer at all. . . . Yet the school was doubling itself in about two years. . . . At the Michaelmas audit I previously sent round to every governor a memorial stating our case plainly, so at last they were obliged to listen. I went there and was certainly treated with courtesy, and explained to them during three-quarters of an hour the system of the school, why it had risen and would continue to do so, and asked them simply to guarantee £1000, we having already done the same. —— opposed me with his usual narrow bigotry. First, with regard to the numbers : “What could we want a chapel for 400 for when we only had 200 as yet ?” This he kept obstinately repeating as if it was impregnable wisdom, as a sort of charm, till I stopped him by saying that five years ago they would have thought me a madman had I told them of the present state of the school, and yet I could tell them that had I not, humanly speaking, been sure of the whole from the very first I would not have moved my little finger, and now the hardest half was done the rest would follow as a matter of

course. . . . Then he began about the money. I told him that when we had expended £10,000 already, and now guaranteed £1000, we thought it a very small thing for the whole power and resources of the Trust to meet it with a poor £1000 on their part. . . . They had a long discussion after I left, because General Johnson would not give up the effort to get justice done us, but finally refused our application with some complimentary varnish.

In this connection the patron writes to him :—

*October 20th, 1858.*

I am extremely sorry to find so little disposition in the governors to meet your very handsome and liberal offer respecting the building of a chapel for the school at Uppingham, and with regret signed the decree of which Mr. Day would send you a copy. . . . I am glad that I some time back told you not to rely on the liberality of the governors, who really appear to me quite as tenacious of the public money of the Trust as they can be of their own, and do not see long before them.

And again, in acknowledging a memorial to the governors :—

I wish you every success with it. But I would not have you raise your expectations too high upon it. I am not sure that the prosperity of the school is a first consideration with some of the governors.

The patron had also advised him not to stake too much in the school, or any hope of support from the governors.

To GENERAL JOHNSON.

*September 17th, 1859.*

I perfectly well recollect your telling me, when you went round our buildings, to have no dependence on aid from the Trust, and I am quite prepared to be on the same basis as Oakham in their eyes. But I am afraid now as then your friendly wish that we should desist from our work falls on

deaf ears. We regret nothing that we have done ; so far from it, that we are determined gradually to carry out all these things ourselves if we can obtain no help. But even if pecuniary support of the Trust was quite immaterial to us, I should still think it very wrong of me, with the convictions I have, to put them in so false a position as not to give them every information and every means of forming a judgment on a point which I feel sure will be the subject of so much attention. I had rather be thought presumptuous now, than that in time to come the Trust should turn round on me and accuse me of having brought obloquy on them and public censure or criticism without warning and without choice. Besides, in very truth, we want the active good-will of the Trust even more than funds. As long as the trustees as a body take no notice of us, so long will many people take their cue from them, and stand aloof and carp because the Trust stands aloof. If we can get a hearty decree for co-operation this audit, it will be of immense value to us, however slow the money may be forthcoming.

TO THE SAME.

*December 5th, 1859.*

I say nothing of my own feelings after six years of such work as has been done here at the share taken in it by the first gentlemen of this and the adjoining county. But I feel sure of one thing, and I will speak plainly, believing that truth is the best. Things have now come to a pass here that make me, humanly speaking, perfectly confident of success. But grant we fail, we do not fail now without all England inquiring why, and learning why. Our friends are too powerful, our connection too wide for it to be otherwise. And when we succeed and, in the course of two or three years at the latest, appeal to the world to carry out our successful plans, I had fondly hoped that a series of years spent in this cause, and the great sum invested in it by our unaided efforts, would have interested the Trust, and that we should have had the gratification of proclaiming their honour at the same time.

Let the future prove whether this is vanity or not. For

the present we will bide our time patiently, and though bitterly disappointed I am in no way disheartened, and with or without the aid of the Trust am content to carry the thing through and see what will be said of this hereafter. My only great regret is that I have been obliged to write this to you, sir, whose hearty support has so often cheered my labours. I trust you will kindly consider what I have written of a public and not a private character.

An appeal was finally made in 1860 to the friends of the school for funds with which to build the chapel.

A splendid subscription of £1000 by Mr. Witts in 1861, on taking a mastership in the school, made it possible to begin building in 1862, and in 1865 the chapel was finished at a cost of nearly £10,000, and presented, as a part of the permanent property of the foundation, to the Trust.

An application for aid in building a schoolroom, made in 1859, met at first with no better success. Strengthened by large guarantees from the masters, it was renewed in 1860 and 1861, when the facts had become so overwhelming that resistance could no longer be made. He was then able also to take a firmer attitude towards the governors. He says in writing to the patron :—

*September 18th, 1860.*

At that time the assistance of the Trust would have been of vital importance to us, fostering and nursing into life the then infant system. Had it been given it must have commanded our lasting gratitude. But it was not given; we had the mortification of seeing the whole power of the Trust diverted to other channels, and had to shift for ourselves. Now we are strong in success, and less inclined to make sacrifices to win a tardy recognition from the Trust, and with higher hopes, but still in a position to feel deeply and gratefully any liberality on their part.

Of the money expended on this fine building, which

like the chapel, was built under the direction of Mr. Street, a considerable proportion was contributed by the masters. It was finished in 1863, and also presented to the foundation.

It is now impossible to recover many of the facts connected with the prolonged struggle of these early years to refound the school on new lines. But the main features of the struggle can be easily discerned.

As he was without any sufficient funds of his own, he had to find masters willing, on trust in his management, to invest capital in setting up boarding-houses. This was chiefly to be done by encouraging them with subsidies, or by relinquishing a portion of his capitation fees as headmaster. The unwilling governors were to be led or driven into taking some part in providing public buildings. Above all, the internal discipline and character of the school were to be fixed on firm foundations.

Of the methods and principles from which the school had already received so decisive an impulse there is an interesting statement in his notes of 1858 :—

My first step here was to appoint good masters by degrees. . . . The next important step was deciding that priority of appointment should give precedence, but that this should be merely in matter of form. . . .

What classes each should teach is decided by the headmaster as according to fitness. To teach an upper class requires more knowledge—a lower more skill as teacher.

Again, instead of making each master responsible tuitionally for the boys in his house, *i.e.* making him virtually head and sole master of a small private school, with many sets and many subjects to trouble his bewildered brain, each master is responsible for his class in school alone, and thus works only one set of boys and one set of subjects. These boys he superintends and helps in their lessons out of school also.

Thus there is no scapegoat to put any shortcoming on. If his division does well, it is his credit, not an alien tutor's; if badly, the same. Thus, too, every master is not supposed to be competent to teach the whole school, but to teach his own class well, and in whatever house a boy may be he passes successively through the hands of all the masters instead of being thrown mainly on one, who is sure to treat some part of the school worse than others according to his tastes and main work. Thus, too, each master is enabled to discover thoroughly what each boy in his class can or cannot do.

His pride and interest are concentrated on one object. If he fails in that, exposure is certain, and no excuse is to be found. . . . With respect to the boys we aim at truth, i.e. giving them the best of all things in their kind, and perfect freedom within such limits as curtail license. The great point of internal discipline is to make every boy interested in the conduct of his fellows. They are their own lawgivers, inasmuch as the more they show themselves worthy of trust the more rules are relaxed. . . . On the other hand, any infringement of the great rules is followed by the punishment of the individual, his division, and the whole school. Giving great liberty, we deal with crime or treason with great severity.

What can be done by anybody if not done is severely dealt with: faults of ignorance, want of ability, or accident, lightly.

It is not worth while to tell a lie, as truth is often pardoned —never punished in anything like the same degree.

We mix much with the boys in games . . . many a boy whom we must put at a low level in school redeems his self-respect by the praise bestowed on him as a game player, and the balance of manliness and intellect is more impartially kept. . . .

The complete way in which the school is in hand enables our influence to permeate it in a way impossible in a mob. Every boy feels that he is known..

The system of single studies and single partitions in bedrooms, combined with the out-school teaching, allow as much freedom and as much help to be given as possible.

We endeavour by encouraging subordinate studies, for the stupid especially, to make every one capable of doing some-

thing—at least to give all some knowledge, and thus avoid the festering corruption of a heap of hopeless idlers. . . .

Machinery, machinery, machinery, should be the motto of every good school. As little as possible ought to be left to personal merit in the teacher or chance; as much as possible ought to rest on the system and appliances on every side checking vice and fostering good, quietly and unostentatiously, under the commonest guidance and in the most average circumstances. For example, the whole school with few exceptions is engaged with their masters from seven to nine at night every evening. To the schoolboy eye and casual observer it is a matter of teaching and intellectual guidance, and it is this. But to me it is also that during the two most dangerous hours of the twenty-four every one is under the eye of a master. . . . Trust should be unlimited in action, suspicion unlimited in arrangement, and then there will be no need for it afterwards.

When boys are thrown together under circumstances which no man could be safely trusted in, what is the good of whining over breaches of trust. Let the government be protective, liberal, and individually felt. Then you have a right to expect individual honour, but not otherwise. A certain percentage of crime *must* result from inadequate machinery and neglect.

Though the school was now growing fast under the operation of these principles, the governors were taking no part and apparently little interest in its progress. "To this hour," he writes in 1858, "with the single exception of General Johnson, no member of the old Trust has even been to *see* what is done here, although once a year they meet in the schoolroom. . . . General Johnson from the very beginning has been earnest and hearty with advice, sympathy, and support, and the knowledge of this has cheered many a weary hour."

## CHAPTER V

### THE BUILDING OF UPPINGHAM (*continued*)

1859-1869

#### EXTRACTS FROM DIARY

OF the vicissitudes of this continuous struggle during the first five or six years of his life at Uppingham but a slight summary is given by Thring himself, and only stray glimpses can otherwise be obtained. Progress was steadily made, but at a great expense of effort and suffering. A considerable sum of money had, in the first years of trial and disaster, been borrowed from his father's estate. Payment of this money was required within a comparatively short time, and he had ever upon him the sense of a crushing burden of debt. Meanwhile, the very success of his methods, shown by the rapid increase of numbers in the school, necessitated the appointment of new masters, and the assumption of new obligations for the purpose of supplying the needed school machinery. Thus when his Diary begins in 1859 to be a somewhat full though desultory record of his own life and of the progress of the school, it introduces us at once into the very heart of the struggle by which he gradually won his way to success.

Something should here be said of the nature of this Diary, of which constant use will be made throughout the following pages. As has been mentioned, it was commenced about five years after he began his work at Uppingham, when already far on his way to assured success, and it was carried on, except during holiday periods, to the close of his life, or for nearly thirty years. At first he seems to have intended it to touch upon the educational side of his life only, and quotations already made illustrate this point of view. But it soon became the repository not merely of facts connected with the school, but of his own inner feelings, his judgments of men and things, his alternating hopes and anxieties, his most intimate personal relationships. Thoughts and opinions for which he did not have freedom of expression in the routine of his daily life he put down freely here, and found a solace in doing so. Although he more than once expresses the hope that his experience may be of assistance or warning to fellow-workers, he apparently came to look upon the Diary as likely to interest chiefly his own children with its record of the struggle by which he had overcome difficulties and had lifted the school to success.

Only selections from such a varied, voluminous, and in large part private record can be given. Dealing as it does with circumstances and feelings as they arise from day to day it is necessarily disconnected, but it furnishes the best available means of understanding Thrings work, the obstacles he had to confront, and the spirit in which he overcame them.

Its complete spontaneity makes it more valuable as an illustration of character and purpose than any formal and continuous narrative, and I have therefore not hesitated to let selections from the Diary form a con-

siderable part of the biography. On one feature of this record a word of comment seems necessary. It is often marked by a strong note of weariness or depression. Many who knew Thring intimately have felt that in this it does not give a true reflection of the writer's most characteristic temper of mind, and that it even leaves a wrong impression of his prevailing qualities. In his everyday life Thring appeared the personification of cheerful courage and buoyant hopefulness. Nothing seemed to dampen his ardour or quench his enthusiasm. To difficulties, dangers, and responsibilities he ever presented an absolutely undaunted front. So true was this that to some it is difficult to conceive him looking at life from a different point of view. But thoughts written down for the most part in the last hour of toilsome and care-filled days, when the armour for the daily fight has been laid aside, while they strike a lower note, may present to us aspects of life as important as any others for the understanding of character. And if the trials of Thring's life seem at times conspicuous in this private record, the true point of view will be obtained by remembering that in his public and working hours he kept them resolutely out of sight.

Readers there may possibly be, again, who will regard the frequent expressions of religious feeling as overstrained and unreal. Thring was not a man who obtrusively thrust religion into the talk of everyday life, and no conversation was more completely free from cant than his. But none who knew him, or understood the atmosphere of faith and prayer in which he habitually lived, will doubt the perfect spontaneity and sincerity of what he says in the written record of his private thought. "He seemed to see

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God with his eye," James Lonsdale writes after a country walk, in which memories of old Eton days spent together had drifted off into talk about present work and a future life. The remark does not represent too strongly the impression which the intense earnestness of his religious life made on those around him, and it may be taken for granted that in this particular the Diary reflects with accuracy the writer's ordinary habits of thought.

To this Diary we now turn to get glimpses of the history of Uppingham and of its headmaster.

*January 6th, 1859.*—The difficulty of setting on foot new houses very great. I feel almost inclined to despair sometimes, and sometimes doubt whether I have done right in incurring such great responsibilities, which are so hardly judged by those who do not enter into my views. Are they right? or am I? Yet I would not grudge life in the cause, and why should I not trust Him who has brought it thus far? Faith as a grain of mustard seed shall overthrow mountains. There are indeed mountains to be overthrown. But some have been pitched into the sea. The rest shall follow. Yet if God will let the necessary weight of a debt which brings in the interference of others be removed.

*February 5th.*—Boys back again; quite pleasant seeing their friendly faces. Fifteen newcomers. The studies and dormitories at the Red House finished. Settled about completing the dwelling-house at midsummer. To borrow the money from Wellingboro' Building Society, and pay off by yearly instalments in fourteen years. Shall insure my life for that time. The contract £1950. Troubles with Alford going on about money.

*March 3rd.*—Wrote to offer Stokoe the Red House and yard attached for nothing, if he would provide himself with a boarding-house. He would also at 5 per cent gain £50 per annum during his mastership by the arrangement. But anything for freedom from debt and slavery; anything, *i.e.* but give up this work. Yet it is very bitter—the burden. Alas!

that it should be necessary too. Must I bear this cross on and on? His will be done who gave it.

*March 20th.*—A hearty letter from General Johnson, saying that he will back our memorial to the best of his power, but warning us not to expect much, as some of the governors, he fears, have not the prosperity of the school at heart. I know that, but we shall ride over them in time if they won't move on.

*March 24th.*—Made an offer to Baverstock to induce him to free me from all responsibility about his house, by which I shall lose a great deal, but in the present immediate need I must make the best compromise I can, as so large a sum must be provided at midsummer.

*April 2nd.*—An eventful week over. Stokoe and Baverstock both accepted my terms. The last houses necessary for perfect working established. Henceforth we strive for perfecting, and improving, and maturing; hitherto for the existence and establishment of the school and system. *Laus Deo.*

*9th.*—Once upon a time I longed for a sphere to exercise my powers in. God forgive me the thought. Would that I could now hide my head in peace. Both wishes, I fear, are about equally wrong and equally right. What will it all signify—if I can but do my duty—the grinding power and yoke that has been riveted round my neck; the money chain on the one hand, and on the other the work and pain, and pain and work, boys and masters, and masters and boys. Truly I feel, sincerely I acknowledge, the dark ignorance and blinded self-will which has made this thraldom a necessary physic. Yet mercy, for we are but dust, O remember whereof we are made!

*May 19th.*—Most unexpectedly the Cross Keys<sup>1</sup> premises, reaching from my garden to the street, for sale at a moderate price, and the key of the position for future school buildings. The masters met and bought it on the spot. Now we are pretty safe. I have always felt and protested that the right thing would come at the right time, and now just as we were on the eve of getting plans, and much debate about sites,

<sup>1</sup> Three public-houses in all were suppressed and built upon for school purposes.

this sudden event takes place and gives us the mastery of the ground we mainly want, besides putting it out of the power of the townspeople to screw us, in a great degree. He will bring it to pass if this is His work. How marvellous, if the daily fluctuations and struggle could be unfolded, would the progress of this work appear! Opposition where most interest in success; blame and strangulation where most love and help might have been looked for; but the plant thriving from inward strength and unexpected help from divine blessing in spite, nay, in consequence of the human impediments. *Laus Deo.*

*September 10th.*—This day six years ago I began life here, and all day long have my thoughts from time to time come back full of gratitude and a strange dreaming at the past. “With my staff came I over this Jordan, and now I have been made two bands,” I may say with Jacob, and I may say it like him with much of what is menacing and difficult about me. How faithless one is! I now understand by myself, alas! how after every miracle God’s people were as distrustful almost as ever. Yet there is trust. Let no one hope that enthusiasm or any earthly reward, or love or solaces of work, will keep him fast and true in a really arduous undertaking. I believe I am successful here, at all events men think I am, and at this moment, as I sit here, after six years’ experience, I must say that every personal hope of joy in the work has withered. With much to encourage there is so much of doubt, that all the feelings have to be kept in hand and sternly closed up. Whilst the eye and heart uplifted to Heaven alone bring real comfort or the support required, so far as this world goes I think I could heartily welcome a poorer, quieter lot. I am sure that there is no compensation excepting in God’s blessing for the toils of this anxious, but responsible, noble, and therefore happy life. Six years. Θεῷ δόξα.

*October 25th.*—A cheering letter from Mr. Acland, not the first time he has given us a lift. Greatly interested in the statement. Told me to send one to Gladstone and Judge Coleridge. . . . Truly “the work goes on and slacketh not.” What a change from six weeks ago! Yet how I now rejoice at the humiliation. It was needed. Now all seems fair and more than fair. We are being brought into the first educa-

tional notice in England, and I think the truth of the work will bear the scrutiny.

*November 24th.*—Opened the gymnasium to-day—a great boon to the school. The boys crowded in in great glee. ||

*November 25th.*—Strange what a perpetual struggle this life is. The masters now are engaging in a contest for power with me, and carping daily at something. . . . I am in the habit of hearing and consulting much, but not one hair's-breadth will I ever give way where it is claimed as a right. It is fortunate for them that there is some one to look after common interests. . . . Here am I after six years of incessant work, head and chief of this school, £3600 in debt still, and the plea now is that they have advanced on our joint security somewhat under £300. I told — if that was all, I would give cheques for the amount to-morrow; that I was not going to admit for a moment any plea of a few pounds when I had sunk hundreds and thousands in the cause. . . . Yet these are excellent fellows in many ways. Alas for poor human nature! . . .

*November 26th.*—Had a letter from — exposing strongly the shocking immorality of the principles there from a master in the school. Felt with pride and happiness how sound and true our men are here. There may be little vexations, but sound and true they are, honourable, good men at heart in spite of my yesterday's trouble. *N.B.*—We all get rather sulky in these short winter days. It is periodical.

*Christmas Eve.*—A calm review of this trying half-year very satisfactory. Immense progress has been made in discipline, in government, and in the external world.

*February 13th, 1860.*—The school reopened Saturday. A good entry—sixteen at once—more likely. . . . We begin in good style. Indeed, to my mind, this is the beginning of the school on its new footing—the first time we have started with a perfect staff in full swing. All the masters very pleasant and in good trim. I feel much what an honourable, earnest set they are on the whole. In writing these lines, principally for my children by and by, I leave untouched my earlier feelings and opinions, however momentary or untrue even, in order that they may guess a little the daily trials of this work, and not merely because the result is good think it has been all smooth. Little cares, when the heart is weary and the body

faint, coming incessantly, have a very absurdly disproportionate effect in a bystander's eyes. When strong and well and fresh things look and feel very differently. Reading or hearing of toil in great heat is a mighty different thing from being at work on a very hot day. Nothing but feeling can make many of the trials of life *felt*, as many of them turn on states of body, and the mind can only guess at them even when it has once felt them, and how little is that possible if it has never felt them at all.

*March 15th.*—(After an account of sports, and details of the athletic events.) A most satisfactory afternoon. Everything so genial and pleasant; one feels *one* with the boys. Another satisfactory thing to-night. The sixth form have met and have made some resolutions for the better ordering of the school in various little matters of discipline, which they have given out in every house, and it has been very well received. The government is beginning to work, and the principles to leaven the mass. This is the first public identification of the upper boys with the system in ordinary routine. I feel so thankful. *Laus Deo.* “The work goes on and slacketh not” They have now taken the matter in hand and made the cause their own. It will not stop here.

*April 2nd.*—An important day. Proposed to the masters that each of us should take a boy gratis, and thus establish two scholarships yearly of £70 each, tenable for five years. They all took it up warmly, and to-morrow we shall decide and legislate for it. Thus we shall secure the setting of a stream of intellect into the school,—no slight matter, judging from the average of the material we have hitherto had.

*April 29th.*—First service in our schoolroom very satisfactory. Nothing marks our progress more to my mind than the changes in our church position, when I recall our painful beginning in the gallery, and the parish service.

*May 10th.*—It has been a great comfort to me in this last week to find that — is a real disciple in teaching, and that, though I have failed almost entirely in any actual teaching reform here, the idea will not die. The failure does not seem the same thing now I know that the seed is consciously sown, and the distinction between the rule world and the principle world growing into rules thoroughly grasped.

*June 1st.*—Took a stroll with \_\_\_\_\_. Talked education and the lectures on composition and the artistic eye that I had been giving my boys: how literary education if true is not book-worm work, but the giving the subtle faculty of observation, the faculty of seeing, the eye and mind to catch hidden truths, and new creative germs. If the cursed rule-mongering and technical terms could be banished to limbo something might be done. Three parts of teaching and learning in England is the hiding common sense and disguising ignorance under phrases.

*October 12th.*—Summoned to the governors. I really believe they have taken our schoolroom in hand. A great thing for us if they have, and a great thing, I may say, for them, as it is the last time they could with real credit take up this school. If they act now they will be fairly entitled to credit. They were very courteous, and we now have some friends amongst them besides the General.

*October 17th.*—I have had much talk with Mr. Warbrough (from Bristol). I think they will found a really fine school on our system. He seems very sensible, liberal, and earnest, and has entered very fully into our work. He told me he intended to draw up a much more extensive report for his colleagues than he contemplated at first, and wished to submit it to me when ready in order that he might not misrepresent our views. This is a great thing. I cannot but feel greatly strengthened by such a tribute, at the same time that it will be an immense engine of power for reforming education.

*October 23rd.*—Could not help feeling bitterly, as I was writing to a man to-day about the proposed Bristol scheme, at the zeal and liberality there contrasted with everything mean, petty, and obstructive here, the governors setting the example, which has been well followed.

*October 29th.*—Mr. Warbrough's report for Clifton College came for me to review, and also a very nice letter from Mr. Acland, both of which give us a great lift, and fresh openings for getting out our principles. Mr. W. speaks in very high terms of Uppingham.

*November 2nd.*—What a weight and an awe life and its work is at times! O Holy Spirit, do Thou keep my heart. One feels such a tendency to harden, to lose feeling and

settle down into grinding work, and be the slave of work and not its master. The greatness of the work here, its dangers and difficulties, sometimes oppress me much. How manifold, how complicated, how unassisted by ordinary aids, every hand almost against us whenever we move! Yet "Put not your trust in princes." The living power of this true principle is becoming a mighty thing. Its walls have risen, as they fabled those of Troy did, to the music of Faith, like a cloud out of the ground, by no mortal power. God grant we may not complete the fable, and when successful, in our pride defraud the Immortal Builder. Give us humble hearts, O God, humble and faithful, and then I need not pray for strength.

*November 11th.*—I clearly see in the other great schools how the tutor system keeps them going. One good tutor and ten bad, *i.e.* one good private school and ten bad, the one good will be successful enough to shield the ten bad, whereas in my system, as it is a system, a thoroughly bad manager might almost spoil all, as the parts must more or less work together, and no one master turns out a boy completely independent of his fellows, as with them. Thus though we are not so likely to get to so low a pitch as they, and under favourable conditions must be at a far higher average, some good work might be done with them when ten-elevenths were bad, whereas that would be impossible with us.

*November 17th.*—A most refreshing note from mother to-day, saying that Fitzgerald had heard from the bishop that the Bristol people were going to adopt our system as the best of all the public schools. So it is getting pretty widely known in Somersetshire.

Under the pressure of great outside private cares, he says:—

*November 18th.*—I felt deeply thankful for being engaged on a real, true work, I trust for God. These sorrows probe and test the heart and motives not a little, and knock about most rudely the fair weather thoughts and feelings. When the waters come in even unto one's soul, how glad one is of a plank from above; how thankful for the feeling of working for Christ, in some degree at all events! It dwarfs at once, too, into its proper proportions the baby frettings of foolish coadjutors. . . .

*November 21st.*—Had a little bit of good from General

Johnson, who, in returning the Clifton College document, said if not marked "private," and he did not see why it should be, he should like all the governors to see it at the meeting which he hoped would take place almost immediately. I sent it back at once, adding the bishop's news, and some information about what the Bristolians were going to do; the sum they had already spent, £13,000, in a site, and what they intended next, a fine schoolroom! This will work in no small degree, I trust, reassuring some and frightening others of my trustees. What should I have done without the old General?

*November 26th.*—Wrote to General Johnson, as he had given me the opportunity, to state positively that if we had any share in the schoolroom we should not be content with less than we had asked for, and also to put before him how others recognised the work if the Trust didn't, and that we were now in the front rank of English schools, and were not afraid to appeal for help to the public, or inclined to put up with half measures from the Trust. . . .

*November 30th.*—This night I stand victorious at the top of the breach. For seven years the Trust has been before my eyes as a massive wall in the way, foiling effort after effort to make any real impression on it. To-day they have decided on building our schoolroom, submitting the plans for our approval before they are carried out. General Johnson was there. What has he not been to us? To my great satisfaction I saw my strong letter to him on the table for the edification of the trustees. Not the least part of the victory is, that it is a victory, not a thing sneaked into; every step of ground has been won inch by inch, not quarrelsomely, but in war, as an independent power, since from the very first I have used the same tone and said the same things. It may be now they have yielded they will take a pride in the school. . . . Indeed my mind has run upon it very little, yet I do feel a strong sense of I trust righteous triumph, and trust in Him who gives the battle to whom He pleases, and who has enabled me to overthrow the stronger. The Psalms this night came in wonderfully with the events of the day. My heart is full of gratitude and my hands feel strong for the future, though there is much heavy work before us. . . .

*December 20th.*—When I look back on this half-year the

stride we have taken seems wonderful. It has been very heavy for me, but I never felt so distinctly triumphant and to have gained so much as this time. . . . The school in excellent order, and on their mettle in scholarship at last. The governors beaten into a new schoolroom. All the cottages wanted to complete the new site bought, excepting one. . . . This has long been a dream of mine. Clifton College and the honour that brings us, in Somersetshire too, where I most desire it. All these things fill me with thankfulness, and praise, and faith for the future. . . . Θεωρητικα.

*December 31st.*—The last day of a very eventful year. Much good, much bad ; a hard year, but with much progress. The debt still heavy on me, but the main work completed externally. Much unpleasantness among masters, but the rebellious spirit put down, or nearly so, and the main work put on a firm basis there too. Much evil in the school, but still just as above, resulting in a settling and consolidating the internal government. So 1861 opens with the brightest prospects I have yet had. May God be with us whatever comes. On looking back a full year I can hardly believe this is the same place, so great has been the outward stride—more visibly great than in any preceding year. Not perhaps in mere numbers, though that has been good (we number 169 in all, I believe), so much as in power and firmness.

*February 21st, 1861.*—Lecture on education in the schoolroom from Mr. Warren—interesting—to me worth anything ; I trust to the school too. I had been praying to-day to be relieved from my heavy debt, or at least given strength to bear it, when, lo ! to-night the lecturer finished his account by an anecdote illustrative of school which had made his heart beat high ; saying that a boy had been travelling in France last summer full of life and spirits, and had been asked by his companions to start early on Sunday to have a long day, and he refused. On being pressed he said, No, he wouldn't do it, the headmaster would not like it. They laughed and told him his headmaster was a good five hundred miles away ; what would that signify ; 'twas nonsense. But he was all the more firm at this. Then the lecturer turned round towards me and said, "That boy was from Uppingham ; that headmaster was you, sir." I could have burst into tears, I

was so touched. The school cheered vehemently, greatly pleased. When it ceased I rose and said I was sure they would all thank Mr. Warren; that they must feel what I at all events felt deeply. I thanked the school for having given one such; I thought there were many among them; I trusted there would be all. O God, I do thank Thee. This may well nerve me for many a weary, anxious, money careful day. It is not all lost. (Bartholomew was the boy.)

*February 22nd.*—How faithless one is; here to-day my heart has been weighed down utterly by money cares and debt. It does seem so hard to toil and toil and toil, and still to be so trammelled, so anxious. Often the words come into my mind: "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." I am just one year's income behind my wants and needs, and utterly crippled, and ever pained by it. . . . Yet I fear my heart is too rebellious, too faithless. I know the blessing there has been on me here and on this work, and nevertheless cannot shake off or bear this agony, and am ready to say—any burden but this—when doubtless another burden would wring out the same faithless cry. Or if not, the very fact of the cry shows the fitness of the burden. Yet, O God, have mercy; remember we are but dust.

*February 26th.*—How I feel the good of young people being bred up with affluent notions, even when in after life their existence is quite different, they are ready if they have principle to engage in large works which a more grinding experience would blight before starting. This seems to me to compensate very much the disadvantage it sometimes is when lower natures require accustomed luxuries. Even then they are not so petty as a more trying and sordid training would have made them. Selfishness is not the worse for being a little less coarse.

*April 11th.*—One learns by experience how different it is being able to do a thing once and many times; to walk one or thirty miles without stopping. Much of the secret of life turns on this; it is endurance, God-given endurance, not intellect, which does great things. How often I feel as if I could sit down and let all go, so incessant is the struggle. Just as at Tenby, when I climbed a very steep slope under a burning sun for half an hour or more, crawling over gorse

bushes with my naked hands, and death to let go, so is life now, very much. It is the prolonged strain and the turning yourself body and soul into a pincushion that is so trying. One gorse grasp is nothing, but a series is no joke.

*April 16th.*—Had a very nice proof though to-day of the school working. I found in my study an exceedingly genuine expression of penitence from E—— in a letter to me. He has also done the same to H——. To reclaim a boy seems to me the most heavenly proof of true principles.

*April 23rd.*—The audit. Came in about two o'clock and was very courteously received by the governors, and at last the whole thing is finished. They buy all the cottages, about £800, and guarantee us £2500 to be paid in eight years. We raise the money and pay the interest, so that in fact we have our new Quad and a schoolroom given us on our paying rent for eight years, which is what it comes to. And I trust all unpleasant audits are come to an end. It seems like a dream; we have at last got more than we hoped for, and there is no unpleasantness, but all smooth. Scott is appointed architect. Butterfield, if he cannot at once undertake it. The old General was there. Θεψ δόξα.

*April 29th.*—This morning a letter from Witts, whom I have twice asked to take a mastership here, telling me that his brother is dying and probably in straits, and asking if I would renew my offer. How wonderfully things are brought about! Of all living men I had rather have him as a colleague, and now he asks me when I thought it was all over, and if he comes will build a house and set himself up. I am exceedingly cheered and strengthened by this. . . . I know no more conscientious, hard-working, nice-minded fellow than Witts is, full of information and with a great connection.

*May 6th.*—The J—— affair ended to-day. The boys are to leave the day after to-morrow. Certainly one learns to form charitable judgments. Taking our experience I do not see how a second-rate school can stand the pressure of ingratitude, folly, ignorance, insolence, and meddling of too many parents. Moreover, unless one tries hard to keep one's heart untainted and fixed on religious motives, the tendency to harden and get reckless, to lose depth of feeling and earnest

sympathy, is very great. I pray God keep our hearts child-like and gentle.

*May 22nd.*—Witts came about twelve, and I think is sure to take a mastership here, and so at one swoop all my main difficulties vanish away. I get here the best working man I have ever known, a man of wide travel and varied accomplishments. He will build a house at once; he is eager to buy up Lord Harborough's land, which it seemed such a pity to let go. He will start a chapel subscription with £1000, and . . . will be a support to me in age and standing. It is wonderful; it is a miracle. How I prayed over some of these points, seeing no way by which they could be brought about, when, lo! they are brought about in this unexpected and more than hoped for manner. Or at least if it is not to come to pass, I have been shown how God could grant it if it was good, and I will try to school my heart in case He judges it not to be. Yet I trust He will bring it to pass. Θεῷ δόξα.

*June 1st.*—A letter from Witts practically deciding to come, though not quite the formal conclusion. Since I have been here nothing more marvellous has happened to comfort, assure, and strengthen me. How I prayed for help this half-year, and now at once "they had rowed hard all night and made little way, when all at once He came and they were at the haven where they would be." Even such is His sending of Witts to me.

*June 5th.*—Witts comes for certain. My heart is full of thankfulness, but as yet I hardly realise all it is to me. This is a full compensation for this weary grinding half-year. I do feel grateful. I hope to see him here to-morrow or next day. Θεῷ δόξα, Amen.

*August 5th.*—Came back on Saturday night after very satisfactory holidays; for the first time since I have been here with no master cares on my hands. . . .

The schoolroom still drags on its slow length. I accepted the proposal of the governors, with the exception of giving a smaller bit of Hodgkinson's garden up, viz., that they should give £2500 and the old schoolroom, and that we should undertake the building. Then they had another meeting, and made a final decree to this effect apparently, only that it was open to the interpretation that we bound ourselves to spend

£3000 in building. I accepted their decree, declaring that we only bound ourselves to spend £2100 in actual building, as the Cross Keys and cottages cost £2000, and I am now waiting to hear whether my interpretation is correct. Scott in the most handsome manner, in his report, repudiated taking the work out of Street's hands, and practically snubbed the governors soundly for their behaviour in thinking of it.

*August 23rd.*—Words cannot tell the intense relief the present state of things is to me. For one thing I have a thorough appetite for my meals now, which I have never had before under the perpetual load of care and anxiety which was always on me, though less felt sometimes than at others. Now, though money is still tight, I feel quite light-hearted and unoppressed. We are in all main points so united, and the work is progressing on a sure basis.

*September 3rd.*—H— proposed an excellent scheme this morning to fund the schoolroom debt, and to keep the whole schoolroom in our hands, which was agreed to *nem. con.* I went and got my bank-book, and am greatly dismayed at finding how much the debt has grown on me this last two years. My heart is very sad. God knows best, but it is very bitter to be trammelled so many years. I feel very harassed. Marie and I knelt and prayed for deliverance if possible, and I have promised, vowed, I might almost say, to undertake no fresh responsibility or expense till free. God bless us in both. If it is Thy work, O God, do Thou uphold us. Is it my impatient want of faith that has plunged me in debt? yet surely the coming of — here was Thy visitation, O God, and that began it. O save and keep us, and perfect this work, we beseech Thee.

*September 10th.*—We all signed the agreement, and those of us who were to, the bond for the money for the trustees; all as smooth as can be.

*September 16th.*—The schoolroom plans came yesterday, and are very beautiful. I only hope we may be able to carry them out. . . . Wrote a circular to be printed, and sent to all the governors to ask them to act on the Chapel Committee and to subscribe. . . . It amuses me to think what a squib in the midst of them it will be, and how it will puzzle some of them to know what to do.

*September 18th.*—Sent off our appeal, but I no longer feel anxious about these things, all will come in good time, though not perhaps the way we think, and I have a sort of feeling that the work will have to be carried through by self-sacrifice, and that the riches and power of the world will not be permitted to take much share in it. . . .

*September 19th.*—Nothing but fears about the schoolroom, and what we are to do if the contract is not taken. It seems hard to give it up, but I had rather do that than put up an inferior building.

*September 27th.*—This afternoon a most welcome letter; the Dean of Westminster will be on our committee. . . . This morning received a £5 note from Mr. Gladstone, and leave to put his name on the Chapel Committee. All the masters are delighted.

*October 1st.*—I feel so happy at having again at least a hundred communicants in the school—real communicants, who come of their own free will. . . . This week has been a week of great blessing to us. First Bishop Chapman's visit and his blessing the school, and then our confirmation. I feel deeply the peace and confidence of such divine aid.

*October 11th.*—Governors' meeting. Numbers shown in 175, 171 boarders and 4 day boys.

*October 17th.*—Delighted by a letter from Mr. Acland, most hearty and thorough, giving me leave to put his name on our committee, and telling me he has been strongly advising my being examined by the Public School Commission. I am glad of his name. He was the first public man who gave me a cheering word here; I shall not forget that as long, I think, as I remember anything. Rawsley was the first friend who sent his son, and dear old Newbolt the first family neighbour who announced his intention of backing me by sending his.

*November 5th.*—Would to God our debt was wiped off. I have been thinking much of it to-day. His will be done, and certainly I have much reason to trust it, but, alas! debt is very bitter. Have been talking to my wife to-night about it. She thinks of the children. I am not afraid for them. If ever I believed anything, I believe God's promise that if we sought Him first He would repay it. They will not want,

or if they do it will be blessed to them. And it is just want of faith about children which stops many a man who is not afraid for himself. Had a very cheering letter forwarded me this morning by the guardian of one of the boys, who wants to subscribe £5 on account of the good the school has done him, and who quotes with pride my declaration that to have been at Uppingham must be a passport for honour, integrity, and manliness. He is a heavy, ill-educated fellow too. If he has felt this so strongly the leaven has been working. God be praised for this. These things cheer the heavy heart weighed down by earthly cares and money gnawing anxieties.

*November 20th.*—I heard to-day that the governors openly proclaim their disapproval of our having changed the system here and raised the school. I could laugh when I recollect my childish dreams when I first came, of how I would be liberal, and not ask them till I had proved my sincerity, and the goodness of the system, and then—how they would meet me in funds and gladly help us on!

*December 1st.*—Witts back from London, and gives a most successful account of his visit to Street. We are to have the windows of Oakham Castle for the great schoolroom. So the governors will understand that. Street is quite up to them. He told Witts that a son of one of them told him in Oxford that the fact was the governors did not approve of the change in Uppingham, and wished it to remain in its old state.

*December 6th.*—Much cheered this morning by Lord Gainsborough giving us a promise of £50 for the chapel.

*December 13th.*—The main body of the school gone and all well. Thank God for having got over this half-year quietly. . . . This has been a wonderful year. What a miracle the whole place is with all its buildings and power! . . . The school is now wonderfully clear of direct evil. There is not now one bad boy here of any age.

*Christmas Day.*—Another come round again, and (excepting money burdens), how free from care! What a noble band of men are now united with me here, and what an unceasing help my own dear wife has always been! Never have I had a discouraging or reproachful word from her in all my great ventures, and its heavy money burdens, and the

way in which all her work is well done is an inexpressible support to me. Had not my home been capable, helpful, and happy, I think I should have died in these sore years. On Monday I rebought Matthias' late house, raising the money on mortgage and bond for £2000. May this be blessed, and not a stone round my neck.

*January 4th, 1862.*—Came back yesterday after a pleasant visit at Shiplake. A momentous year ended. It is impossible to overrate it to me and the school. . . . Witts and Rowe have come, and two fine houses set on foot. The schoolroom controversy nearly brought to an end, and a chapel fund advancing steadily, while the school internally is in first-rate order. To set against this the expense has been crushing, and I am nearly at my wits' end for want of money. To-day my heart well-nigh failed me as I thought of our debt and the difficulties before us, and earnestly and bitterly I prayed to God for help and deliverance. Next week there is a meeting of the governors about the schoolroom plans. . . . I never began a year with so much promise, and at the same time things are very critical too. May He who best can bless, keep and sanctify us in this sore trial and severe strain, and turn the evil to good. Cloudy the year begins to me, full of clouds, but the sun is visible behind. O may He burst through this barrier, and shed light on our work. Must I always work in chains, O God? If so, give me heart to say, "Thy will be done."

*January 7th.*—Heard yesterday morning of the death of dear old aunt at Clifton. This alters all our plans. I go to Alford for the funeral on Thursday. . . . The long journey is both sad and expensive.

*January 15th.*—An eventful week over last Saturday; one of the most eventful, as far as visible facts go, in my career. I went down to Alford to Thursday, and my father was exceedingly pleased I had come. To my astonishment, for I did not know my old aunt had anything to leave, I find myself with a legacy of £500. This wonderful answer to my prayers, this help and deliverance in part has greatly comforted me. Then on Friday I hear both the school plans and the chapel have been passed by the governors, and I hope now all serious difficulties on this score are at an end.

In the meantime the J—— affair<sup>1</sup> has assumed gigantic proportions, as I have been honoured with scurrilous leading articles or notices in sundry of the low papers. . . . Private letters of the vilest abuse come in, and one can but sit still and bear it all as one best may. . . . Some harm it will doubtless do, but I trust good also. I feel so sure of being right, and the malice and lying are so bitter that I trust in God against such iniquity, and were it a thousandfold what it is would still do so. I may truly say in this matter, "God is on my side, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."

*Sunday 26th.*—The last day of my holidays. Have been reading one of the Christian Knowledge little books, *Alice Gray*. Blessings on the simple little stories of my generation. If the day is hotter and the burden heavier, these little fountains and breezes keep the heart refreshed and pure. How much I owe to them!

*February 2nd.*—To-day has been quiet, and I have felt strong in purpose and endurance. Yet a strange shadow of awe and imagining has wrapt me about very much to-day; glimpses of eternal purposes, and my own weakness and shrinking mixed up with faith and prayer, and readiness to do and act, stirrings of unknown futures, strange contradictions of humility and power, strength and defeat, or seeming contradictions clashing within; a desolate, chilling sense of the wickedness of the world and the difficulty of doing good combined with a quiet perception of Christ and His working, and the need of working like Him, and that these earth chills arise just because the work is His. In a wintry land the brilliant ice-shapes spangle and shine unthawed and also unhurt by night. But when the sun draws out life from the earth darkness raises fogs to blight it. An evil success rouses no enmity in the evil, is applauded by the world, but truth must face the storm.

<sup>1</sup> Several boys had been flogged for want of punctuality in returning to school after the Christmas holidays. The father of two of the boys protested, and published his correspondence with the headmaster. The public discussion of the matter gave Thring a reputation for severity in school management, but in the end greatly strengthened his position in the school.

*February 4th.*—Another very malignant article sent me has rather clouded my day. The Dean of Ely<sup>1</sup> brought his son to-day, and sundry parents have occupied my time. I feel very weary-hearted again, perhaps simply because I am tired. . . . I really feel to-night so jaded, and badgered, and faithless, and hard, that a little (or much) of the old Adam rises, and I almost long to plunge into some fierce reality instead of holding on in patience and power . . . instead of the long restraint, the bearing the quiet daily efforts, the self-control, the real, true life of Christ.

*February 8th.*—In the afternoon I was exceedingly cut up by finding a most sarcastic satire on me in the *Saturday Review*. I am not ashamed to confess that to find educated gentlemen joining in this scurrilous attack was a very bitter pill, not only personally, but more and more making me fear for education generally. However, I defy the devil and all his works. . . . There is a stern reality about this life, its trials and temptations. I feel Scripture so. But yet would that I had more faith.

*February 9th.*—A quiet day; the Holy Communion—very comforting. Preached in the afternoon for an Uppingham missionary in Australia, Mr. Greaves, one of Holden's most valued pupils. That and the offertory came to £12 for him.

*February 10th.*—Hateful as the turmoil is, I am much supported and very little cast down. The greatest nuisance is expecting every post to find one's self pilloried in some fresh newspaper.

*February 12th.*—It seems most strange to me that the depth of interest in the work here, and all that appears calculated to draw out feeling and love for it, should be suffered to be so rudely swept away and blighted. May it not be that this feeling is of self and human, whereas Christ would have an unselfish and heavenly motive for work. I know not. The fact is certain: the reason I believe to be this. For assuredly He does train us in the best way.

*February 14th.*—Was asked to play football to-day; the Sixth against the school. Did so, though I have long ago given up regular playing; it is too severe. Had a first-rate

<sup>1</sup> Harvey Goodwin, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle.

game. They play a great deal better than when I left off, indeed they play beautifully. I could not help thinking with some pride what headmaster of a great school had ever played a match at football before. Would either dignity or shin suffer it? I think not.

*February 22nd.*—Played football again to-day. Am reading with two of my first form for the Christ's scholarships. I must say the terms one is on with the older boys are simply delightful. I am so gratified by the way they always bring me any little bit of literary news they think will interest me.

*February 24th.*—I have felt very happy to-day. I paid the rector the last instalment of our £500 subscription to the church. £170 and rather upwards of it has come out of my own pocket; for S——'s and M——'s departure made it fall very heavy.

*Wednesday, April 2nd.*—The beginning this new book (of the Diary) fills me with solemn thoughts. What will its records be, shall I ever finish it? The first day of it has begun with an auspicious event, as yesterday we gave a concert to the town which went off exceedingly well. I rejoice exceedingly, and look on it quite as an epoch in the school history. For, first of all, it is of infinite advantage to have been able to find a way of publicly knowing and benefiting the town. The choir has been much raised in dignity by it too, and will be greatly improved in consequence of the increased zeal.

*Sunday, 6th.*—A quiet, peaceful day, though wet and dreary in the morning. What a blessing the Sundays are! How much vexation and care I bury on them, resting, and worshipping God, and often receiving of His peace!

*April 19th.*—I am sick of parental jaw. When will people learn that in nine cases out of ten they only hear half the evil against their children. Honesty is a very hard thing for a schoolmaster; self-interest in these carping days of shame and delusions makes it a brave man's work to face his duty of punishing evildoers, whilst the great anxiety and grind of the work may make even an honest and brave man pause before he draws upon himself the fresh evil and annoyance of an angry parent in these days of lying and publicity.

*May 10th.*—A trying week over. Some of the boys very busy collecting money for the chapel. It is very pleasing to

find the honest interest they take in the things. I value their zeal more than all the rest. This has been a very eventful half-year, perhaps the most eventful externally that we have spent, but God is bringing it to a successful close. Θεῷ δόξα.

*May 11th.*—A quiet, calm, pleasant day, with a sort of feeling of coming battle about it, “the lull before a tempest,” a far-off murmur of schoolrooms, and chapels, and governors, and commissioners, and brothers, and masters, all blended together as about to wake into noise and strife. I pray not. Would that life was but work and the fighting away. But what matters the pictures on the slides if at the end there is something real.

*May 14th.*—I feel very weary day by day. Bed, as at Ilminster, has become to me again the best part of the day. Debated this morning whether we should lay a first stone for our chapel at all. I get very tired of the perpetual friction or dread of friction. I understand what men meant in past days by the “cold shade of the aristocracy.” To do hard, anxious, and responsible work with a dead man tied to you, Mezentius-wise, is no joke. I am full of care, too full—μῆτερ μηδινάτε. Yes, but where is there such faith? Would to God I had it, I am very weary. We make a beginning this week in the schoolroom. One pleasure to-day, a beautiful copy of English verse translation from Nettleship minor.<sup>1</sup> He will indeed be a star if he goes on, and a steadier, nicer fellow never breathed, or more trustworthy.

*May 17th.*—Saturday seems to be a day of important news and doings for me. To-day I signed the schoolroom contract, and Witts and I signed the first contract for the chapel. May the blessing of God rest upon it and complete it. The schoolroom is to be finished by 31st March 1863. The step itself is very weighty, and full of daring and anxiety, increased indefinitely by the temper of the Trust, and the uncertainty whether we shall ever be free from molestation from them. It is doubtless good, but every stone here is laid in sorrow and fear, and mortared with sweat, and blood, and perplexity. God help us.

*Sunday, May 18th.*—A fine day, quiet and peaceful, enabling me to consecrate somewhat yesterday’s work by prayer

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Nettleship.

and praise. Indeed I have been singularly free to-day from care and thought.

*May 27th.*—A talk this morning about the theory and practice of elementary teaching, and what is the object of school-work, which I hope may bear fruit. I insisted strongly on the collecting material being the first thing, and that the necessary grind in the lower classes ought to make a boy acquire enough in a fair time, whilst as regards teaching, that too much should not be attempted, but the worst class of faults weeded out first by strong measures, others being passed over till then with mere correction, and also that it is good to have a special lesson for grammar explanations and questionings, making the other more acquisitive of material.

*Sunday, June 1st.*—A very friendly letter from the Dean of Peterborough this morning again, really very friendly. It has comforted me much. It is really the first genial recognition I have had from any one in this country, and I value it accordingly.

*June 11th.*—Money cares heavy on my heart to-night. Debt is a fearful burden, and with a younger brother's position in a family, with no common feeling on life, but with plenty of touchy love to make them anxious, a yoke most painful—most heavy. It is *my cross*. I dare not pray for its removal, and yet I cannot bear it. O may He who alone can comfort and help.

*August 9th.*—How strange that with an obstinacy which can face anything there should be interwoven a sensitiveness which can face nothing. Let there be want of sympathy and tact, and any power in one of the family, and it makes me ill to have to meet it. How strange, too, is life! Men look on it as a straight path of right or wrong, whereas in its higher complications right and wrong get very doubtful in many things as higher and lower laws clash and mingle. 'Tis easy to go on in a straight path when there *have* been no false directions or wandering, but get out of the path either willfully or by being forced out, let the relations or bearings of life be as it were dislocated and out of their respective positions, be oppressed and wronged, and have the woe and the work and the struggle then. Oh, not to do any wrong amidst a tangle of such a kind! Nay, even to know which

is right and which is wrong, when like David we must eat the shew-bread or die ; this is what I seem to have known. . . .

*August 15th.*—My want of faith is very distressing ; here am I, after nine years of preservation and wonders, yet so weighed down by the weight and burden of the life, so crushed by the constant roll down of the Sisyphus stone of the world and its power on my head, that I feel I fear less strong in spirit instead of more strong from all that has been done. One thing, I now know the weight ; then it was only to come. I have now felt the battle, then I was but marching into it. . . . I want the patient power of a leader.

*August 28th.*—Then Atlay cheered me greatly by his helpful good sense, and he is going at once to set about trying to get security to raise £2000 for the second contract of the chapel. I felt greatly his thorough-going aid. Then in the evening I had a talk with Holden, who showed me in many ways how strong a hold the principles of the school have on some, and filled me with hope of establishing here a character for honour and truth. I was cheered to my very heart from it.

*September 21st.*—Have been taking leave of Willis, Nettle-ship, Anstey, and Bartholomew, and have been intensely comforted in parting by their quiet, honest goodness. I do feel the grace of God to-night in sending out these spiritual sons of mine. Anstey especially asked my judgment about his profession, and after a little talk said he wished to be a missionary, and thought his father wished it too. I had a most interesting talk with him about life, and am indeed strengthened by these visible proofs of noble purpose, so sober, so quiet and calm, but so steadfast and pure also. . . . Years of toil are repaid by these moments ; clouds of doubt and sorrow clear as I see the reality of what is doing, and I cannot but glorify God.

*September 29th.*—Yesterday I went over to Kibworth. Osborn had asked me to meet F. D. Maurice, who had been taking duty in the neighbourhood, so I was tempted. Maurice is a little man with a fine head, large above and lessening to the chin, thoughtful-looking, and acute, a mixture of both, reminding me slightly in some ways of *Essays and Reviews* Williams, but looking more powerful and less gladiatorial. He talked pleasantly, but not very much, gave me the im-

pression of observing men rather than displaying himself, withal gentle in manners and quiet, a man seemingly who had rather teach than fight, and rather fight than give way.

*October 1st.*—I spoke seriously, though very friendly, to N—— to-night about the necessity, if he is to be made *præpostor*, of his being thoroughly trustworthy as a helper of the helpless, a doer of justice, and having the spirit of order and true open life. I said that something more was wanted for a *præpostor* than mere negative qualities, and that if I did not feel this in him I should not make him one, as would naturally be the case in about a year.

*October 5th.*—Mrs. Macmillan said this morning, that coming to church as she did with her impressions formed from college chapels, she was almost overcome to hear the singing by all here, and that she shall send every one to see, for that it is impossible without this to have any idea of the place and all its tone and character.

*October 21st.*—My teacher of carpentry came yesterday—a most intelligent, respectable-looking young fellow, quite the thing for the work; thoroughly trustworthy looking. Have been making arrangements with him to-day.

*November 28th.*—Had a letter from Sir Stafford Northcote himself, asking my opinion on an important educational question *qua* Eton. Wrote a long letter in reply. I do feel most grateful for the great proof this is what way the school here and its principles are making in the country. It is wonderful how God is bringing us out, and making our work here bear on unexpected ways on the great schools.

*January 8th, 1863.*—Went to Rawsley's on Friday last and spent two very pleasant days there. Came back on Monday. Since then have had on one of my debt fits of illness and anguish; it is fearful having to drag on in this way. I find myself exceedingly involved at the present moment, though the school is, thank God, flourishing, and I am very harassed again and downhearted. It seems so endless. It is a fearful thing having to conduct a great work of this kind without capital.

What shifts has not one been reduced to! How dearly sometimes has the advance or not going back been purchased! What a load is on my head and heart! . . .

*January 21st.*—I am inexpressibly tormented, quite ill, at the thought of my debt. The want of £1000 at the present moment not only poisons all this prosperity, but almost drives me to despair. I cannot get out of it; it wraps me round like a plague mist, and yet there is no real cause for such anguish, I believe. Certainly things have been far worse for the present, and never so bright for the future. Yet prolonged pain breaks down the strongest; repeated wounds cow the bravest. Then I was fresh, however great the pain; now I am weary hearted and worn. May God strengthen me. One thing I find: I must not stay home again till I am more free. How shall I face the half-year if the holidays gnaw my vitals so fearfully!

*January 23rd.*—This afternoon's post brought me the pleasant surprise of a cheque for £50 from my father to mark his approval, he said, of my staying at home this holidays. My poor father will never know the needs of different lives, or anything about mine. How gladly would I have stayed at home often, if work and worry and care would have let me, and it is only on the last page that I have recorded the impossibility of doing it long! However the £50 is very welcome, and my father well pleased.

*January 31st.*—This evening all the boys back. I quite rejoiced at seeing the pleasant, friendly faces of my upper pupils, and at their hearty greetings. This is the pleasure of our life, that we live with them and they with us in so kindly a way. I do feel cheered and strengthened at finding myself amongst them again. Certainly if being liberal and true has brought much pain in some ways, it is an exceeding great reward in all things pertaining to life. Θεψ δδξα.

*February 1st.*—I have been reading to-night one of those refreshing little story books which from time to time keep my feelings clear and simple and nerve me for life, a book my mother has sent to little Margaret, edited by Mrs. Gatty, seemingly by a child of hers, at least the initials make me think so. . . .

*February 23rd.*—I sometimes think this record will seem a strange querulous sort of affair, but nevertheless in a journey the heat and fly-stings are very serious, and what I feel to be the burden of my life is just the unnecessary bloodsucking of

these absurd but deadly little jealousies, tempers, and perpetual baitings. . . . What is done and the success by and by will want no history, but I cannot but think that the difficulties and vexations that have secretly hindered and embittered the work may prove no useless knowledge to true workers, even if it be in their judgment only the record of my own shortcomings and inefficiency. For the success of a great work becomes all the more valuable as an example when it seems to be God's blessing on the true effort, rather than any out of the way excellence in the human instruments.

*February 25th.*—The Sixth Form are thinking of starting a magazine in the school. I shall encourage it. Anything which gives life and occupation is good.

*March 12th.*—A—— (who has not been at all satisfactory here) came to see me, and with many tears confessed that he had been having help in his verses given him, and that he could not bear to go on doing wrong in this way any longer. I had some nice talk with him and comforted him about the future, and after praying with him a short prayer, and telling him to begin and end the day with the same sort of short special prayer for help, sent him away much relieved in heart. But these are the blessed glimpses God sometimes vouchsafes us of truth working and leavening, lifting up the veil a moment to show us the secrets of inner life, and that it is not in vain that we struggle and strive for truth. To think of a little boy, voluntarily, in no row, but quite unsuspected and unaccused, coming of his own accord to the headmaster to get the painful burden of a secret dishonesty, which in most schools is considered nothing, and of necessity is made to exist, to get this off his mind and to be comforted and seek help and advice! It is a glorious reward. This is indeed the impression I have wished to give the boys: of one ready to help, and gentle to comfort the earnest, however clothed in power and obliged to use it often. Thank God, they do think this of me—those who are in need and can come to me for sympathy.

*March 13th.*—I now see what has puzzled me, why despotic rulers so persistently and seemingly madly resist and struggle against popular reforms. No man who is responsible can stand the pettiness and selfish folly of semi-responsible advisers.

There is no medium. Such a ruler must either be like our Queen, relieved of almost all responsibility, or he must be despotic. To be responsible and have to yield and veer about with the semi-responsible and officious, no living being could stand.

*April 3rd.*—How much I feel at these periods [a pupil was seriously ill] the reward of true work! I do not fear meeting our pupils before the Judge.

*April 9th.*—I should like to carry out my theory of teaching more perfectly, but that, excepting in enumerating general principles, I have not succeeded in establishing as I hoped. The men are not trained enough to appreciate fully either my views or the rules of obedience. So I am obliged to leave them to do what they can, and to be satisfied with a fair graduation of subjects and fair uniformity in the general plan. A really well-taught upper class school, where all classes are being worked on a graduated scale of teaching as well as of subjects, is the work of another generation. . . .

*April 21st.*—. . . One of the governors, in the course of this discussion, said "it was a mere money speculation of ours;" I turned full on him and begged to contradict him most emphatically, and to assure him that I knew at the beginning, as I know now, that it would never answer me at all events half so well as getting rich on the old system without risk. "Then," quoth he, "you did it for nothing." "No," I answered, "I believe in education, and the greatness of the work in supplying education in a country which needs it as much as ours does. And I was ready to stake my life then on doing it, and I am ready now. I admit," I said, "times have been when the magnitude of the undertaking has made me feel very weary hearted and weighed heavily upon me, but not now, gentlemen, not now, now we have succeeded. Even if I was ruined there are those gone forth who will never forget the system they have been under; the seed is sown. I have no anxiety now." Mr. Finch said certainly as to the  $\kappa\delta\delta\sigma$  I might be satisfied; I had enough of that. I said I cared for the work, that it was no money speculation. In the course of the discussion, they said their successors might bless them (curse) for the repairs of these large buildings. I said I was prepared to stand the judgment of

posterity as well as they . . . It was a sharpish encounter ; I can give but a brief though pretty correct epitome of it. One thing I rejoice specially at : the having borne witness before them with all my might that it was no money speculation, but an anxious desire to serve God. Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, they have got it, and cannot repeat their calumny honourably again. I sincerely rejoice, and on the whole feel that I have borne good testimony on this day. But only to think' of a body of English gentlemen venturing to assert openly that their successors would curse them because of the *repairs* needed for our noble buildings. They said also their successors might object to the largeness of the school. *Proh pudor!* What is the good of talking, what can argument avail, what impression can truth make on men who argue that their successors may curse them because of having to *keep in repair* the noble buildings *we build* ?

*May 8th.*—The whole holiday for the school reaching 200. I spoke a few emphatic words yesterday—very few—telling them just to ask the question of themselves, “What has made us great? Truth and liberty.”

The schoolroom which had been the outcome of so much anxious thought and work was opened on June 18th of this year (1863). Thring's speech on the occasion remains to illustrate the ends he kept in view, and how steadily he held to them :—

I know not what may be the feelings of the great company that has met together here to-day in this noble building. That a power has been at work in this place all must see. These buildings are its outward sign ; your presence here a testimony and a homage to it. We claim that testimony—that homage—distinctly and boldly as given to the cause of truth and true work—to that and to nothing else. This is the magic that in spite of all difficulties is doing what you see. No one can know the might of true work and faith in it till he tries. It is not genius,—it is work and faith that prevails. Perhaps some may think that if I chose I could tell an exciting story. It may be so. But this I know—the

story of our life here is very simple and as prosaic as it well can be. An earnest desire to work out truth and faith in truth against any odds ; a belief that the young need not be false—that is all. My colleagues and myself felt sure that to educate without machinery for educating was a sham, and that the result would be a sham and all false. Acting on this belief we began, and the rest of our life has mainly been one long series of laborious, commonplace days. Ten years ago, —just ten—this noble old foundation counted its twenty-five boarders and one house. You see to-day what a clear sense of honest work and patience can do with scarcely any external aid, and none of the glitter that usually dazzles mankind. . . .

Something also I would say to the school on the subject of school greatness. I have observed lately no unnatural desire to claim a position among English schools. Now you cannot claim it. It must come. Indeed, we are very far from wishing that the school should come forward on the false ground of mere increase of numbers—which may be an increase of shame, for a mob is not an army—or of mere identity with other schools, which is not what has made us what we are. Yet be sure there is the means here of being great. Have you so soon forgotten the motto in your head room—

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,—  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.

Yes, power must come, and there are two ways for it to come. Most of all, and first, the winning a character for truth and true honour. Most of all, that no lie in word or deed, no shams, no underhand deceits shall harbour here—nothing that will not bear the light. Let this be the school character, as I trust it is, and fear not, the school *is* great.

And, secondly, though it is but an offshoot of this—the winning character for scholarship. There must be true, earnest, untiring work, and appreciation of work, renown for scholarship, and every one caring for that renown. Now we have had much individual excellence and much success, but it is idle to expect that there can be enthusiastic power, the tenacious grasp, the bull-dog perseverance, the eager grudging every moment as lost which is not clearly gained, the racer

elasticity that belongs to a truly great school, if all from the lowest to the highest do not hang on the reputation of their champions, and kindle in them living power by the consciousness of all eyes being fixed on them. No school will reach its full stature till this universal feeling exists; no amount of deader work will make up for the loss of this living fountain of life and energy. Be then great, and fill out with daily growing power this fair temple of learning in which we are. Show yourselves worthy of it. . . .

Who shall set a limit to the power that goes forth from here—those generations that so quickly pass out into the great English empire as a band of brothers? Who shall stop it? It will grow and grow, and be a witness in all lands. When we look back a little and remember that a few years ago no language would have been thought too scornful to deride the possibility of what to-day is our reality, why should we doubt what is yet to come? Why should the prophecy of the little that remains be thought a vain dream—the prophecy that a few years yet onwards, and by God's blessing, when men think of their youth, and talk one with another of truth and honour and steadfast work, the name of the school shall rise readily to their lips, and deeds of patient endurance and a character hardly won for quiet, unassuming trustworthiness, shall fill with honest pride the hearts of those who then shall be able to say, "and I too was at Uppingham. Nothing is too great for the power of truth."

*August 24th.*—Yesterday, to my great surprise, I received a letter from my dear father, saying it had occurred to him I might have a balance against me at my banker's, in consequence of the setting the school on foot with so many masters, and that if so he would help me to the uttermost of his power. I do feel it such a blessing to see his love thus coming out now he is so aged, and I have so prayed to be delivered from debt, and also to have my father's and mother's love and sympathy in this matter. I have written a letter expressing my great gratitude, stating that it is not a necessity, but would be an immense relief and sunshine to me, but that if it cannot be given in trust in the blessing that has been on the work here I could not take it. I have borne testimony to the

motives which God put into my heart to begin this work with, that I cannot repent of it, and that they must not help me under false motives in this, and I have tried to show how much I loved and honoured them. . . . I do so love and honour my father and mother, and yet have had a life so different that it was difficult in any way to meet on any common ground. Now at last may God bless this and put it into our hearts to have this union. But God be praised for the letter itself, even if nothing more comes of it.

*August 30th.*—God be praised for Sundays. I have had a little time to-day to collect my thoughts, and feel my heart strengthened by recalling great realities of God and truth, and what life really is, instead of standing at bay against incessant work and no less incessant care, till I can think of nothing else.

*August 31st.*—A letter from T—— to-day full of congratulations about my having been practically offered Charter-house in the holidays, which evidently pleased my father much. . . . I felt particular satisfaction in my father and mother caring for this, to me, very trifling event. It is valuable as serving somewhat as a stepping-stone to them to arrive at what is going on here and the importance of the work.

*September 1st.*—Much comforted by a letter from my mother. My father was greatly pleased with my letter, and will send me a present of £100, and if I wish it will apply to his trustees to let me have some capital. My dear father, what a great thing this is! I do so rejoice at the pleasure my telling him about Charter-house gave them, and also at his being now satisfied with my work in spite of my not having made money. I would not for the world give him the trouble and anxiety of applying to his trustees.

*September 10th.*—I have been dinning into the masters again the two great principles of constant communication with one another about teaching, but if not that, the paramount necessity of each master fastening tenaciously on common faults in class-work, and destroying them out of his class before dealing in the same way with others.

*October 14th.*—I heard to-day of the sad accident of old General Johnson. He has fallen down and seriously injured or broken his leg. The old man, however, when he found

this, would not rest till he had made Mrs. Johnson write at his dictation what he wished to be done at this audit, which he actually had intended to be at before this happened. All honour to the brave old man who has year by year from the very beginning done his best for the school and its improvements. Without him we should have been almost powerless, and the discouragement arising from the rest would have almost crushed us.

*October 27th.*—Heard of General Johnson's death to-day. He has been a hearty, true friend, and worthy of all honour from us. What we should have done without him I don't know, with that cold and hostile phalanx of wishers of evil and prophesiers of evil trying to fulfil their own prophecies. But his presence and support cheered us in work, and gave us the means of expressing our opinion. *Requiescat in pace.*

*November 5th.*—M—— reminded me to-day of our first beginning of the choir—six boys in a little room behind the hall, and now—the new schoolroom and half a hundred. How little the masters realise these things, or what it was to face the world then, to conceive the plan, and work it through! How nothing but the immediate gift of God could have supplied the conception and the strength to work it. It is like a wonderful dream.

*November 29th.*—Altogether to-night I feel more comforted by God than for a long time. How I smile at the feelings at the end of my curate time, when having fairly mastered my limited range of temptations by God's grace, I thought that nothing more could move me, so serenely it seemed could I face the great evils, as they are thought. And now I am like a reed. How absurd the judgment of man would be! If my first I judged my second I what a calm pity he would bestow on the weaker character, when in reality I am a veteran in mind and soul endurance now compared with then. But such are circumstances and judgments.

*January 5th, 1864.*—To-day I actually began to put in hand in a small way a book<sup>1</sup> on education which Dr. Beale started me up to doing in some degree, though it has flitted before my mind before.

*January 17th.*—I certainly have been happier this holidays

<sup>1</sup> *Education and School.*

than I have been since I came here. . . . The sense of having got on a truer footing with my father and the family is very soothing. There is no more mean concealment, and my dear father has softened, and been able to trust me and feel for the work here.

*March 23rd.*—I made a statement of what had been done about the chapel, and proposed that those masters who choose should each be security for £250, but not liable for any more. Five agreed to this as well as myself, and I have written to Burton accordingly with the absolute certainty now of being able to go on with the work. All passed off in the quietest way.

*April 3rd.*—The first proofs of my book came to-day. I wish it was well over. I am curiously drawn in different directions. My lifelong feeling, my belief and wishes, as well as my personal desire for credit, all make me greatly interested in the book, whilst on the other hand, the fear of strife and criticism, and the longing to be undisturbed, all make me dread its coming out. I must say, though, on the whole, the interest greatly predominates. It seems to me such a doing battle for right, and such a bringing out my life-work into the front ranks of this busy world. May God bless it.

*May 13th.*—(Of his brother Godfrey.) Let not his faith in the truth of this work and Thy blessing be shaken. For in good and evil report he has believed in the wisdom of doing good here, and hoped against hope that the end would show who was right, and that blessing would be on honest work and self-sacrifice. I thank Thee, O God, for having given me the comfort of his faith.

*May 23rd.*—I was thinking this day what a fearful ten years I have spent here and am likely to spend seemingly, but strange to say, on honestly questioning my inner heart whether I would change this hard and bleeding life with its feelings and its truth for a softer one with less heart treasure gained, my heart boldly answered No; boldly and decidedly took the pains, and let go the easier lot. I was myself astonished at the strength of the feeling.

*May 29th.*—This morning at 8.30 we signed the two deeds for the money for the chapel, and received £1700. So now the chapel really is once more on foot I shall be very thankful to see it finished.

*June 8th.*—Gave out the prepostors' holiday this morning. Made a satisfactory speech. When they cheered at the announcement I told them they might well cheer, as it embodied more than anything else our principle of life, that good was enjoyment and enjoyment good. Next we appealed to a national feeling of ambition, which was the same that made a man proud of his family or his country—the ambition of being renowned for maintaining law and right, not for being traitors to it. That every half-year gave me less to say, and every half-year a true feeling that sneaking is sunk lower and lower in the school and reached lower strata. That we ought to care for the school as we do for our country. . . . We had not now to coin a character and a name, but we had a character and a name we ought to uphold and raise higher. It was easy comparatively to be renowned for university distinction (though we were not as yet as we should be), but a character and name for truth and high tone was of slower growth, but lasting, belonging to all, not the work of a few. I trusted we should all strive so that no one should be ashamed of the name of Uppingham. These were the main topics. . . . I hope this will tell.

*June 24th.*—In the morning Mr. S\_\_\_\_\_, a Manchester merchant, who has had a son here three years, but now leaving, came to me in the most feeling way, and said he felt it a simple duty to do what he could for the school, that all he could do was to give money, if I would but tell him how he could best dispose of it. I thanked him very much and asked him to consider, indeed I felt the manner of his acknowledgment deeply. At the recitation I saw him, and said I should like anything he gave to go to a general fund for carrying out our plans, if he would allow me to announce it. He at once gave £100, which I was accordingly able to give out in my speech; he said, too, he hoped to give something again. This is a great light and encouragement, opening up a source of power which I trust will do much as time goes on, but above all cheering me immensely from the way in which it was done.

*August 21st.*—Little F\_\_\_\_\_, who has been here a year or so, on getting moved up into a higher class, rushed home after school to his house, knocked at the drawing-room door, and ran in, and finding Mrs. R\_\_\_\_\_, on the sofa, kissed her twice,

and told her the good news. A touching little bit of school life.

*August 31st.*—Yesterday the match with Mr. Finch's eleven. I never saw our boys play worse, half of them don't try, and have no spirit. That annoys me. There is no doubt, I fear, that the hard, rough life we led at school, whilst very harmful in all the finer feeling, did in many instances produce vigour.

*October 10th.*—Took leave of —— to-night. Am greatly pleased with him; he has been an honest, manly fellow, and I am proud of his taking those feelings from the school. He said he could not do much in classics and work, but he hoped to represent the truth and manliness of the school, which was the great thing. I told him that indeed it was, and that I had as great an affection and respect for him on that account as if he could get the Balliol.

*October 14th.*—De Winton's report in; speaks highly of my division; says Nettleship's Greek prose was the best of its kind he ever looked over.

*November 1st.*—A splendid essay from Nettleship. I hope he and some of my pupils in years to come will play a great part in upholding God's truth.

*November 6th.*—Another boy entered yesterday. A great weight off my mind not having perpetual anxiety about entries. God be thanked for this. It is very cheering in reviewing the past to see and feel how purely an instrument I have been; how all the good work has been His, and how invariably any mere human devices for good or evil have come to nothing. God's guiding hand bringing the things to pass.

*November 18th.*—I sent Nettleship off to Oxford this morning not without prayers on my part. . . . I saw him last night and told him not to be too anxious; that life was long and scholarships short, and that in one sense, and that the best, I really did not care whether he won or not, only let him continue to do his best.

*November 21st.*—A great day over—a day of blessing, I hope. The bishop this morning confirmed 56 boys for us. The whole school attended, and the service was very quiet and impressive. The bishop gave a most earnest address to the boys, pressing on them with much power truths they have

heard from us. I have been very comforted by the bishop's visit as well as Mr. Osborne's, who preached yesterday for us. For the first time something of the exceeding desolation and solitary feeling which has been so hard to bear has passed away, as now we are getting friendly help in the neighbourhood. The bishop said he should try with the Bishop of Oxford to get a private bill passed to enable us to consecrate our chapel; only think of that! I asked him to preach at the opening, and he has consented. In every way he is eager to help us, and he strikes me as genuine.

*November 25th.*—To-day most unexpectedly by the afternoon's post received the news that Nettleship had got the first Balliol scholarship. There were three to be given away. A most pleasant letter from Rawnsley giving some particulars.

*November 27th.*—The first Communion; about 120 boys attended, a happy scene of peace and trust. Recommended Nettleship's victory and myself to God.

*December 5th.*—For the first time these eleven years the end of this half-year sees me with no great care, and able in some degree to be at ease. It is a strange feeling; I keep expecting that something must come. Yet there is much debt still, but the school is so prosperous, and no *draws* now on my income coming, that my heart is fairly at rest. Neither is there any childish nonsense amongst the masters any more. The days of nursery rebellions seem past.

*December 28th.*—This holiday for the first time now in eleven years, no great weight of care, danger, and pain is on me; God be praised. The first time. I feel so peaceful. The papers for the New Commission on Schools reached me on Saturday. Last night a sort of new world opened to me in my prayers as the conviction that to be humble, patient, and true was the highest earthly lot, came home to me in a way it had never done before.

*January 13th, 1865.*—J. H. Green been here about building a 15 house. I put before him in the strongest possible way, that whilst I allowed him to do it I should not consider myself in the least tied as headmaster by his doing so, and if I ever had to sit in judgment on him as a master,

should not let it have the slightest weight in my decision. He must do it entirely on his own responsibility.

*February 2nd.*—I feel less a coward to-night, but awe-struck at the coming time; yet how blessed is my home! I do believe a happier home is not to be found. This is a great support. All the cares, however bitter or deadly, are outside.

*March 5th.*—Life is certainly at very high pressure with me; even in the holidays I am very little free. Many ties as well as want of money fetter my movements. My work has to be done with a thumb and finger; my annoyances and distractions with a hand and three-quarters; my pleasures to be taken by fits and snatches; my bores by the daily bushel. I get quite puzzled as to the moral effect of all this. For self-conscious culture it is decidedly unfavourable, but how far the unconscious character is shaped for good whilst one thinks one is simply being banged about, is as unknown to the man himself as the same sort of thing must be to the wool which is flung in at one end of a machine, carded, torn, worried, washed, entangled, disentangled, pulled, squeezed, thumped in the darkness, and comes out cloth at the other end. I hope this is so. I feel in some sort it is, but I think I should like more time to ponder my ways, try and mend them, reflect and work. Incessant carding may be good, but it is certainly unpleasant.

*March 16th.*—The entry is getting wonderful, 14 already for Easter, and 18 for Midsummer. We shall be crammed.

*April 11th.*—To-night the quarter is virtually over, the happiest I have spent for these eleven years. Not that there have not been many cares, but still I find the whole impression has been of happy work, no quarrelling, and no gnawing heartsore going on. I cannot help admitting that on the whole I have spent a happy time.

*April 21st.*—The chapel is beginning to look finished. . . . Street was here to-day. He is evidently greatly pleased with his work here, both in the result and because I have trusted the whole management to him. I assured him I thought he had carried out my idea as near perfection as might be. . . . It never seems to strike men that able workers who devote their lives to subjects ought to be trusted, and

produce better work if trusted. I am sure the having put the work unhesitatingly in Street's hands has had much to do with its great excellence.

*April 25th.*—The audit day. Showed in numbers, 282, 274 boarders. A 1st Balliol scholarship and the 1st Trinity scholarship at Oxford. Not a word from any of them. . . . A schoolmaster never wants a slave in his triumphal car to tell him he is mortal.

The school chapel, the outcome of six years of anxious thought and work, was consecrated on 27th April.

*May 1st.*—(After speaking of the ceremonial and the speeches). . . . A glorious day. . . . We have now cast behind us much of the petty annoyances of our earlier life here. Yet it was most curious to remark amidst the general admiration and high encomiums passed, the total ignorance of our real work, objects, hopes, and success. Curious and not encouraging. . . . I can scarcely credit the having the chapel at last, and the escape from the hurry and discomfort of our unwelcome occupation of the church. Now a new epoch begins. *Θεῷ δόξα.*

*May 30th.*—It is curious what idolatry of land and game there is in England. A man may be excellent, religious, genial, sympathising, anything, but if he is a landowner, and you have not tried him on land and game, you know nothing of him. . . . "Scratch a squire" and you get to clay at once.

*August 16th.*—Took leave of the — ; of the elder with pleasure and praise, of the younger with words of solemn warning on his half-hearted work and life. Clever, ambitious, and keenly alive to praise, he is too unstable and selfish to excel.

*August 29th.*—Gave a holiday to the school on the occasion of reaching 300. Old boys' match. The school was beaten easily, but the team against us was very strong. . . . A letter from C. E. Green to the E—s in great glee; he had bowled out the Rugby eleven for twenty-eight runs. He was the captain they sent the insolent message to, offering to send a house eleven to play us. This had stuck in his mind ever since, and now he had wiped it off.

*September 1st.*—Got in my banking book to-day for the first time for many years without trembling and sickness of heart, though there is much arrears yet to bring up. . . .

*September 4th.*—A memorable day. This morning I spoke very strongly to the school on the disgraceful affair on Friday, on impurity in word, thought, or deed, and lastly, on the fact that our liberties here and pleasant life depended on truth, and that whether they liked it or not, they must choose whether they would support us and the good amongst themselves or the felons. And then I cut off the holiday. I had not been long home when I heard a noise of voices in the passage, and found a deputation had come with our "Charter." I said at ten o'clock in the face of the school, when I should read it out and demand whether they would abide by it, and then they should claim, as I had promised, the remission of the punishment. The culprit, though, must be given up. So at ten o'clock they came. I read out each head, and asked to each, "Do you abide by this?" and to each came back a full answer, "Yes, we do." Then I remitted the punishment, and spoke on the living power of such a profession of truth. It is a glorious thing. The most glorious thing that has ever happened in a school. Thank God for it. Now we have the whole school appealing to their love of truth as a charter, and the charter itself established in their minds as the deliverer from shame and punishment. It is a glorious thing, a happy, memorable day.

*September 5th.* . . . To-day the masters played the school. I got a 0, and 37 was our whole score, but we rather collared them after, and got them all out for 87. It was good fun. It is a wonderful proof of our substantial unity that masters and boys can thus contend as two sides. It is something to be able to play with them, but far beyond that, to be able to play against them. . . . I do feel so happy in the state of the school, its public profession of faith. It makes me feel so among friends, and that God has blessed it.

*October 2nd.*—Heard to-day of poor Blyth's death. He begged to be remembered to me in his last hours. One of the greatest comforts I have felt in the trying work here has been the feeling of union hereafter with our dead. Not fearing to see them in that other world, but longing rather to

be there with them. Will they not meet us? and be our teachers in the new glories which they first have entered on? Surely hereafter we shall be full of happy communion.

*October 4th.*—*The school is quite full.* I filled the last vacancy to-day. And yet such is common success that I almost forgot to note this great external fact.

*October 9th.*—I am quite getting back my old elastic working power now the awful strain of anxiety and jaw is gone. I am reading *Cæsar* and *Chaucer*, besides writing exercises occasionally, and can really take interest in the actual work, as I am not overwhelmed by other cares and heart-tearings. . . .

*October 12th.*—A sad day for one thing. Baverstock, my old and valued friend, has sent in his resignation and goes at Christmas. Though long expected, like all long-expected things, it has come suddenly at last,—this, the first break in the band of true workers here. It is like cutting off a piece of myself, warning me, too, for it is really death that is separating us, that I too am drawing nearer to my goal,—one more of my generation passing, not prematurely, but in his appointed time, a friend of my youth departing. O God, have mercy and help us in Thy hand. It is a great grief.

*October 20th.*—To-day I filled up the last vacancy in my house for next October, this time year. When I remember the event every application used to be, it is like a dream.

*November 3rd.*—Preached yesterday on almsgiving. The offertory in the morning most unsatisfactory from the little given by the masters. How men expect boys to give liberally when they don't I can't understand. I had the gratification, though, of sending £60 to India, the first worthy offering as a school we have made. I trust it will be a great living power in the school, as boys see the reality of the help they can give.

*November 12th.*—A glorious day, like King Josiah's passover; at least 160 voluntary communicants from the school, a most thrilling sight and service. Thank God. All went off well yesterday; 80 confirmed. The bishop made two good addresses, and the boys looked very nice. Two hard days over. . . . Have had a summons to London on Tuesday to be examined by the Schools' Committee. I detest

it. My work is broken in on, which I hate. I hate the travelling. I don't believe in committees. To be sure they assume they wish to know, but then one is to have the work and harvest of a toilsome life curiously handled and appraised by a wise, authoritative inexperience. . . . What a fool I am, too, to be making grievances and drawing ink sketches on the evening of this glorious day of hopes fulfilled, and grace given, and assured blessing.

*November 15th.*—Back from London, on the whole immensely gratified with my examination. All the main points and principles I care for were well brought out.

*November 16th.*—A perpetual feeling of a new world rolling into sight for schools, and of our work here being sanctified and blessed beyond my dreams,—so strange does it seem to my mind to find my long-cherished scheme for English schools going to be brought into Parliament and pushed with power.

*November 29th.*—My birthday, 44 years old. . . . A busy day in various ways. The boys of my house gave me two very handsome volumes as a birthday present. I have thanked them, telling them my true reward will be in their lives, in their true work, in their honest devotion to the cause in which I have staked so much. Gave out the *præpostors'* prize this morning. Made a speech, expressing my conviction of the progress of true principles in the school, that they get wider and deeper, and that though I suppose we must have fools and beasts sometimes, that they are less and less worshipped, that there is less "donkey worship." I gradually got my speech round to this phrase, and I think have settled for a season the mock heroes. . . .

*December 29th.*—I have been engaged, and am still, in carving four medallions, likenesses of the children, for M——'s workbox. They promise well. I quite accidentally discovered I might be able to do it owing to having wasted some work on a bit of wood I then found out had been broken, and whilst the other bit was getting ready, trying a profile of Margaret on it with some success.

*March 25th, 1866.*—I am reading *Mendelssohn's Letters*, a noble book which has done me much good. I feel very nerved for work, and in much better order than I did. I must cast

all personalities, all things out of my mind and heart, but the *cause*, and the *cause* as in Christ's hands, in faith and hope, but not anxious or down-hearted come what may.

*June 4th.*—Life is beginning to be very happy with me ; God seems to be all around me in blessing, blessing work and blessing rest, and giving wisdom and new fresh thoughts.

*June 19th.*—The impression made by Nettleship at Oxford seems very great indeed, quite extraordinary. I can well believe it, as his knowledge, thoughtfulness, and receptive humility are very striking. Thank God for letting me see this first.

*August 17th.*—The Bishop of Brisbane here, and gave us a most excellent lecture to-night on missions in Australia. It will quite bring new life and ideas into the school. I am very thankful for it. He proposed that the school should build a parsonage house at a poor station he named. I hope we may do it, but we have got much good, that we cannot help having done.

*September 2nd.*—Looked over my banking account yesterday. Thank God for His goodness. For the first time in many years there is a balance in my favour after payment of all my debts, excepting the £1600 advanced by my father years ago. Thank God. I wish to give one year's clear profits as a thank-offering with Marie's consent. I have spoken to her about it.

*January 17th, 1867.*—A fearful ice accident yesterday in the Regent's Park. Some thirty or forty people drowned ; the numbers not known yet. Among them poor Woodhouse, one of our boys—a good fellow. It is a great reward for true work, or trying to work truly, the not being afraid to think of those who have departed from us, but being comforted rather. . . .

*February 9th.*—Had a letter from Mitchinson this morning with a scheme for a union amongst the better grammar schools for a joint annual school tripos, as it were. I see it won't act, and I don't want in the present state of school politics and knowledge to get mixed up with any party or movement. But I do not mean either to throw cold water on the thing. I shall go quietly to work.

*March 24th.*—Skrine has won a Corpus. A very nice

letter from Conington this morning giving me an account of his performance. His translation was "exceptionally good." There were fifty-seven candidates, and the excellence of them beyond all preceding years. This is pleasant.

*March 30th.*—The welcome telegram to-day that Lewis Nettleship has won the Ireland. This is glorious. To-day I really felt a happiness in results. Before it has been rather a sense of *deliverance*, of drawing breath with a danger passed, blessed and greatly needed, but too serious for enjoyment. To-day I felt a rest and enjoyment as well; for these successes quite put us in the first ranks of winners. God has rolled away the reproach from me, and I feel at the right time. . . . It will please my old father, too, so much, and dear mother. I hope my letter will give them the first news, as it is Sunday to-morrow and no newspapers. How many great things have happened to me on *Saturday* and Sunday. It is a thing I love to think of, then I can thank God better. I do thank Thee, O God. The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; that I feel and know, as years have brought wisdom, and I rejoice to feel and know it. . . . It is so hard to remain simple and untarnished. There is a certain surface power in beginning that when one has penetrated through the crust in life work and sees the weakness and iniquity of one's own heart, as well as the strong powers against good, that seem utterly to break down and leave one like a creature with its shell changing, soft and feeble and defenceless, the old gone and the new not come. Yet it is not so, the invisible has come, but it is hard to be sure of it, hard to let go the visible, hard and a thing of time to walk with God. But I will not fear.

*April 1st.*—Made a very strong and I think good speech to the school this morning (apropos to some fool or fools having defaced the notices of their own Game Committees), on the want of law and honour in the school, and what really made a great school, clinching it with giving out Nettleship's great triumph, and telling them it was worthless compared with the individual truth and love of law and good of the boys, by which the meanest amongst them in age or rank added to, or diminished from the character of the school and its true glory. I trust this fortunate coincidence of Nettleship's

splendid feat just when I wanted to pitch into them about their mean, disorderly doings will add weight to what I said.

*April 10th.*—There has been a great controversy about the championship, in which I have acted as arbiter and legal adviser of the Games Committee, and all the parties concerned are pleased and satisfied at the unravelling of the tangle and final decision. It is curious, but I have no doubt this power of getting to the inner boy life, and their trust in me in matters of this sort, is more potent for real good here than all the rest of my work almost put together.

*April 11th.*—A nicely-written paragraph in the *Guardian* about Nettleship and our success, just what should be said if it was said, probably by W—, but I wish they would let matters alone, and not stick things into the papers. As long as fame meant bread and escape from ruin it was different, but now it doesn't; the less we are noticed the better. Those who care will know, but the praise and glitter of popular fame is a great snare and drawback to true work, particularly among boys. They are too apt to be led by what people say, and to look away from true unconscious work into a glittering mirror of distorted self.

*September 10th.*—Walked out with Anstey and Rawnsley in the afternoon. The former asked me point blank whether I was satisfied with the school according to my theories. I answered on the whole "yes," very decidedly, and then went into the petty causes which somewhat interfered with a more perfect result, and explained pretty fully how things went on.

*November 28th.*—To-day I have authorised Street to take the tenders for our beautiful west gallery, £641, 16s. Field, of London, is the contractor. Our appeal for money is going on well as yet compared with the former one. I shall be so glad to get a finished bit of ornamental work in the chapel.

*December 1st.*—The Holy Communion. About 135 present and 25 went out; a glorious sight, make whatever deductions can be made. Yesternight two boys came in to me to ask advice how to settle a bad boy in their house, and uphold morality and right. This is very cheering. They tell me to-day they think they can manage it.

*December 9th.*—My home and work have become very happy. In spite of much toil and surface vexation, inseparable

some of it from a schoolmaster's life, some of it a speciality of this county, life has ripened into a very happy lot. My heart feels at peace, and all the crushing care and bitterness has been succeeded by a calm of completed tasks and blessings vouchsafed on them.

*December 24th.*—A happy day on the whole, beginning with a very complimentary letter from Dr. Craik, who has been Moderator of the General Assembly in Scotland, on my book. As I know nothing in the world about him this was pleasant. Then I put up the beautiful engraving of Holman Hunt's "Finding in the Temple," and very beautiful it is. Wrote on the back that the signatures are autographs.

*January 22nd, 1868.*—A most gratifying letter from Lewis Nettleship, speaking very confidentially to me about his views, and opening out his heart; giving me at the same time very warm thanks for what I had been to him in religious matters, which is an inexpressible comfort to me.

*February 26th.*—A beautiful day, and a day to me of much blessing. First of all I actually sent off the real last proof of my Grammar. I am so glad. Best of all I walked out with Anstey, and in the nicest way he offered £100 to the chapel, and, on my expressing the wish, allowed me to divert it to the garden. So that will be begun at once. I shall, however, again ask him to-morrow whether he had not really rather devote it to the chapel. In any case I feel cheered and blessed. . . .

*March 1st.*—Heard from Witts to-day that the report of the Commissioners has come out, that there was an abstract of it in the newspaper. So in a day or two I shall have it. I am rather curious to see it, but do not expect much. "Put not your trust in princes," especially in parliamentary princes, who have to look after themselves and their own balance a great deal too much. Still it is another step in the education question. If I could but feel my heart sounder and purer I should not mind anything else, but it is hard to keep calm and work with depth and fervour when half one's work is gnat catching. Hard, too, to be faithful when one sees the silly way conceited men and boys walk by their life-work with their noses in the air, and sip and spill and abuse the water bought for them, like that for David, with very life blood.

Yet it ought not to be hard. It is just what Christ sees us do, and yet He loves and helps us.

*March 26th.*—I was very pleased to hear to-day that Little, Earle, and Cornish start the subscription for the Old Boy window with £100. This makes it certain that we shall be able to order it, as they will, I doubt not, get £200 more, and by the time it is up be able to get the rest. This, with Anstey's donation, quite puts me in heart. It seems that the sacrifices made bear some fruit even in that way. . . .

*June 16th.*—My Scotchmen (Fettes Trustees) came to-day and I took them over the school, and showed them everything, and let a great deal of light into their proceedings, I think. They had been going about with no principle to guide them, and I gave them one. . . . What will come of it I know not, but some good, some more method in their proceedings certainly. I could not help contrasting in my heart their £100,000 to spend in building, and their desire to do it well with my own governors and their antagonism.

*August 16th.*—The school *quite* full; actually no room to take any more. Hodgkinson over thirty.

*August 21st.*—Just now Miles came in to speak to me about his boy and his work, and I had a very interesting talk with him. He is a good fellow. I set before him that he must vividly impress the ethics of education. First, that it is valuable; secondly, that each boy can *certainly* get it; that the denial of these propositions, the worst evil the neglect of the great schools has brought on England, was at the root of most non-learning. Also that an idle, obstinate boy is a problem for an able man to master; the worse the material the greater the skill in working it, and that he must not be baffled.

*October 4th.*—During the last two or three years the constant recurrence of petty offences, without being able to fasten them on the school at large, whilst at the same time it was clear that the total absence of a common spirit was the real cause, has been inexpressibly trying. I have felt more and more that the old school feeling one strove for so long and under such difficulties was gradually slipping away, passing into air, and yet that there was no way to get at it and stop it. All one said seemed empty sound, but now at last I have an occasion which the school feels, which I can punish heavily,

and which makes it natural and fitting to speak strongly and enter into full explanation.

*October 12th.*—I had a letter from Stogdon at Haileybury yesterday which I have made do right good service. He spoke of the keenness of the Haileybury sixth form for work. I just read it out to my class, and asked them each how far they recognised Uppingham in such a statement. I believe I really have stirred them up very much at last. I ought to have done so; their dead-alive ways, with one foot in their work and the other in their own fancies, and head and body lolling between the two, are quite insufferable.

*October 29th.*—The special offertory on Sunday for Australia was £20. This was really very good. Another cheering fact.

*February 15th, 1869.*—Certainly the comparative freedom from care is a great boon. Happy the kingdom that has no history. 310 boys in the upper school, 45 in the lower; quite full.

*February 21st.*—This morning the draft of the bill to be introduced into Parliament about schools came. It stirs up my thoughts. I had some idea of writing a letter to Beresford Hope, the Cambridge member, who sent it, but on second thoughts shall do nothing. But this keeps one anxious and expectant. I have no fears for ourselves. We can scarcely help being gainers, but it may bring me a great deal of awkward work and temptation and worry, and I have little hope on the whole question, which is sad and trying.

*April 20th.*—It is flattering that whenever there is any talk of great schools under this bill, from whatever quarter, Uppingham is mentioned in the van.

*May 1st.*—The day before yesterday we settled to buy an acre of land and set about our hospital immediately, and also to buy the two acres next at £250 per acre. It is the only building land very convenient to us left, so I am well pleased. I have felt happy and strong to-day in spirit. I thank God with all my heart for His great goodness to us.

*May 26th.*—A capital letter from Mr. Johnson, ready to work heartily with me, acknowledging to the full the position of the school. . . . I have written again to say I think we shall have little difficulty, and that the better men of the governors will be ready to join us, but if not, that it will not hurt.

*September 10th.*—This day sixteen years ago I first came to Uppingham as master, having never visited it till two days before, when I went back to Cookham Dene to pack up some books and come. What a wondrous change!

*September 22nd.*—Have begun German again seriously, and hope to get on. Have written to the bishop to thank him, and ask for a confirmation in the spring. . . . Masters satisfied with my scheme for the school. This is good also.

*September 23rd.*—Heard from Alington to-day that he has written to accept our missionary post in London under Mr. Boyd at the Victoria Docks. An excellent thing for us; I hope good for him.

*September 27th.*—This morning I spoke to the school on almsgiving, and announced to them that the arrangements about our mission were completed, and that Wynford Alington had accepted it.

*October 9th.*—I feel so much being in health. It is wonderful. I cannot think I am so old as I am when the refreshment of this new health is with me. All is well in work, except that I feel troubled in heart somewhat at my own feelings. The work interests me so much less. I do not feel that deep inward hold upon it, and it on me, that I used to. I always said I must stick to this as long as I had work left in me, and I blamed men who left their spheres, but now the temptation gets very great. I long so at last to have a home, not to be for ever with boys in the house, and all the responsibility, unrest, and wretchedness of this life upon me. . . . Yet if this longing is wrong, God grant I may not give way to it. I pray I may do right. I would fain work His will.

*October 15th.*—I am ashamed to say how very lonely and perturbed I feel to-night. . . . A deep sense of weakness and danger comes over me as I feel my lonely, solitary stand in this land of exile, and on the other side the Commissioners with all their undefined powers and undefined principles; what is defined, their non-religious character and their very definite yielding to popular cries for some subjects, etc., definitely against me. “I can only lift my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.”

*November 7th.*—. . . The week altogether has been a

week of strength and courage to me. My heart rises and I feel upheld, quiet and clear, and close to God.

*November 20th.*—Rather downhearted. The work, possibly, which is very constant and hard, and the double wound to my vanity and beliefs about my book, have brought home to me very closely how utterly I am without hope of really overcoming the gigantic confederacy of power, prestige, money, and ignorance, all so deeply pledged against truth in schools. As often as this gets pressed home, the work becomes more galling, and all the petty vexations, real and imaginary, swarm like flies. God knows how many hours of my life are passed in thinking over the situation of the school, and guarding in imagination against attack, and shaping my course in case things go wrong. Too many, I fear. . . . It is hard to work on without any hope of the good cause conquering in England, with at best, as far as that is concerned, a faint idea of improvement in some of the more outrageous defects. Still on the side of comfort I feel God is with me. I feel He has allowed me to succeed in showing truth. I feel still more that He has given me to breathe it into living hearts, and to light a quenchless flame; though where and how that flame will blaze up is hidden from me. This ought to be more than enough, and in the depths of my heart is, but, such is man, my surface daily temper and feeling sometimes feel little or nothing of this strong inward comfort beyond barren knowledge that it is there.

*December 5th.*—I have been reading Bishop Hamilton's life. He was a noble fellow. It has done me good, I hope. May God give me grace to wish for nothing but a true heart and a true work.

We may pause here to take account of what had already been accomplished. In the years which had elapsed since Thring took the school in 1853 it had been lifted in point of numbers and reputation from the position of a small county grammar school into an acknowledged position among the best of the ancient English public schools. The twenty-five pupils with which he began had increased to more than three

hundred. Houses for boarders had been established in sufficient numbers, each adapted to carry out the principles which Thring believed essential for the right training of boy life. A noble chapel had been built as a centre for the common religious life of the school. A schoolroom large enough to hold the whole body on public occasions furnished sufficient opportunity for common life in other things. A lower school had been founded as an adjunct to the larger establishment. All the ordinary equipment for games and recreation usual in the best public schools had been secured, and to these a gymnasium, then a new feature in English schools, had been added. A carpentry, also the first of its kind in a public school, gave pleasant employment and some degree of manual instruction to boys with a turn in that direction. Music was cultivated as it had never been cultivated in any English public school before. These were the chief external facts. A resolute will and a clear purpose had enabled him to accomplish in a few years what in other schools had been the slow growth of many generations, or if more speedy, the result of splendid endowment. A will no less resolute and a purpose equally clear were required to deal with other and more public sides of his school life.

## CHAPTER VI

### SCHOOL COMMISSIONS

THE main constructive work at Uppingham was barely completed, when Thring was forced to enter upon a prolonged and anxious contest to save from overthrow some of the fundamental principles on which it had been founded, and on which his educational beliefs were based. He had been deeply interested in the appointment of a School Commission in 1865, and when summoned before it, had stated fully his views on school structure and the best methods of developing the smaller endowed schools. His reception by the Commissioners had been very friendly, and he had been led to hope that their report would at least embody the gist of these views. They were not even referred to, but instead, he found what he calls "a great indirect glorification of the old and new shams." As the report is now known to have been chiefly the work of a distinguished headmaster of one of the very schools which Thring rejected absolutely as offering a standard for school structure, his disappointment can easily be accounted for. Of the Commission generally, he says:—

How ridiculous it will seem in years to come appointing  
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a lot of squires and a stray lord or two to gather promiscuous evidence on an intricate professional question, and sum up, and pronounce infallible judgment on it. However, this is the English panacea now—this witches' caldron—and small hopes it gives. I do not feel downcast. God has helped us in spite of "princes" all along, and will do so, but it vexes and mortifies, and makes the future look very dark, and the present feel very cold. However, the work goes on ; that is not stopped. If Christ accepts that, what signifies the rest ? If I can feel this, what signifies the rest ? And I do in part feel it.

What he had hoped for from the Commission is shown in a letter to his friend the headmaster of Sherborne, who had suggested that an appeal should be made for new schemes on which to govern their schools.

To REV. H. D. HARPER.

*January 18th, 1869.*—I could not answer your letter before as I was absent from home, and only returned on Saturday. The report of the Commissioners was "a very heavy blow and great discouragement," but I do not see my way to action. Indeed, the heaviest blow, it appears to me, education could have received. I made quite certain that the question, "What constitutes a good school?" must be raised. I was not hopeful, far from it, but I thought a Commission with so general a scope, examining all kinds of schools, could not help somewhat discerning, whether right or wrong in its views, the meaning of the word "School." And if this was done, attention at least would be excited, and this would be a gain. Alas ! even this very modest hope was found false.

The Commissioners have not raised the question at all, but have tacitly assumed that certain schools not within their province of inspection are models, and that all the schools that fell within their net need only be like them. . . .

There is no standard to appeal to. What great school, even in theory, has faced the problem of teaching and training *each boy* in the best way, with all the constructive skill and machinery involved in that problem ?

For my part I desire to separate my lot entirely from the fashionable schools, and to cast it in, come weal come woe, with the earnest working men, and smaller schools, which one may hope to see doing honest work. But then the standard to refer to should be, "What work is each school intended to do?" and next, "What tools has it for doing this honestly?" Up to a certain point, and a high point too, the mere dead construction, the brick and mortar situation, etc., are everything. We don't want the governors to give us their old lumbering seventy-fours, or still worse their cheap imitations of them, as the models for our new steam fleet.

But what is to be done? I confess I don't see. We have not got to the threshold of the inquiry; what *teaching* really means—and what *training* really means—and what a school *to teach and train each boy* really means. Our authorities, to which the appeal must be made, have finished before they have started. I cannot make an appeal under such circumstances. It is a real fact that England is ringing with discordant cries and omniscient prodigality of suggestions as to what subjects should or should not be taught; this is to be changed—that introduced; whereas any experienced man, I am sure you will agree with me, must cry, "For God's sake teach anything, only ensure that your great schools by their construction *do not prevent true teaching*, and afterwards it will be time enough to discuss subjects."

Subjects can be changed at any time, new ones brought in, old ones cast out or recalled, but when thousands of pounds have been spent on wrong principles of construction, and costly and sometimes beautiful buildings put up—which, nevertheless, are second, third, fourth, or fifth rate in work and efficiency—a yoke that cannot be shaken off—that is a very different matter.

I have entered into this matter at greater length than I should otherwise have done, as I thought it necessary to explain why I cannot see my way to any action as long as there is no standard of truth to refer to, though I feel the report of the Commissioners to be the most disastrous, as it is the most unexpected reverse that the cause of true work has received or can receive.

Mr. Walter, of the *Times*, an Eton contemporary and acquaintance, who was now watching from his place in Parliament the progress of the Endowed Schools Act, had written to ask his opinion on certain points in the proposed bill. In the concluding sentences of his reply Thring lays stress upon the same vital points already referred to.

To JOHN WALTER, ESQ., M.P.

. . . I, and many with me, I believe, feel sure that all the requirements of a good school, the machinery without which true work is impossible, are most definite, and can be stated in each case with great certainty. So if we are right, the Government is going to plunge into the great work of reconstructing all education without any fixed principle to guide them, up to their eyes in conflicting evidence, and in total ignorance of what is desirable or practicable under given conditions; with no ground secure to begin from, and seemingly in a state of utter confusion between the very different subjects of what is to be taught and what is necessary before you can teach anything. But this want of principle makes it impossible to feel any interest except fear in these great measures, as we do not see how any real part can be taken in a work of this kind till the preliminary question, "how each boy can be trained in the best and most certain way, given the price that can be paid" is decided. It seems to me people must know what they want before there is much chance of getting it, and that to set about making a thing before there is any settled idea what the thing to be made is, in any case is strange, but in the case of legislators who are not professionally engaged in the work and conversant with details, impossible. . . .

Thring's real anxieties began when, as a result of the Report of the first Commission, the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 was carried through Parliament, and provided for the appointment of Commissioners

empowered to undertake the reconstitution of ancient trusts and foundations.

These Commissioners soon turned their attention to Uppingham. Their right to deal absolutely with the school and its resources was more manifest in law than in equity. Because the new foundation of Thring's creation, already with more than £10,000 of yearly income, to be much increased later, had grown up from an old foundation which produced barely £1000, the whole was treated as subject to the jurisdiction of the Commissioners. Thring had always dreaded the hand of external power applied to life-work ; he now saw it preparing to deal with all that he deemed most vital in his school.

*December 29th.*—Once more the war has begun. This morning I received a short kindly letter from Roby, the secretary to the Commissioners, drawing my attention to the fact unofficially that he could see nothing in our statutes to make this school an exception to the clauses which are to unchurch schools. Little words which I have long been fearing and expecting. I wrote back unofficially, that if the having been founded by a country clergyman in post-Reformation times, and on the strength of that my having refounded the school in these sixteen years, did not constitute a claim to be a Church school, when this was clear and all other remedies failed, I should put my resignation into the hands of the Commissioners, but that it would be a hard return for seventeen years of such work as I have spent here to drive me out. And I did not think it would encourage either education or freedom. But the bigotry of the Liberals is unspeakable, and unjust as it would be, I am not at all sure that I shall prevail against them. Truly it is hard, but I am thankful to say I feel strong in heart and health and not cast down. I thank God for that. Between the governors and the Government, with their lust for power, life gets rather squeezed into a corner, and a thorny corner too.

*December 30th.*—It is marvellous how step by step life

moves on, and before one knows how or why, some great irrevocable event has come, gone, perhaps, and a long vista of doubt and difficulty opens. . . .

To H. J. ROBY.

*December 29th, 1869.*—You raise one vital point in your letter: the question of whether this is to be a Church school as heretofore, or not. I will be candid on this also.

The fact that the school was founded by a country clergyman in post-Reformation times, with 18 out of 22 governors appointed by himself, clergymen, and that till within this century [the Church's] prayers have been said from that time to this does mark the foundation distinctly to be a Church foundation. I saw this clearly when I came here, and on the faith of this made my plans. I can testify most solemnly that my sole motive (if that can be called a sole motive the absence of which would have made every other null and void) was to do a work here for Christ, by which I am bigot enough to mean the Church of Christ as now existing in this kingdom, whether it is to be disestablished or not. I believe in no other permanent fountain of good. The school as it now works is entirely the result of this belief. If this refounding is to be overridden, as well as the original founding of the school by a clergyman, the Government is bound to give us back our chapel and schoolroom which we gave them, and let us start for ourselves. If they will not do this, and no regard is had to those who founded this school either in past or present times, and all remedy fails, I have counted the cost, and shall at once, as soon as that is clear, place my resignation in the hands of the Commissioners, and leave them to find some one else to carry out their will and the will of the Government. . . . I have for some time been prepared to hear what you told me, and have calmly made up my mind in quiet beforehand, when unbiassed by discussion or excitement.

TO THE SAME.

*No date.*—You may well think, without my saying more,

how little anxious I am to run my head against a wall if I can help it. Still more, I fully believe much good is meant to education, and personally I am anxious to throw no obstacle in the way, or to make the very responsible work of the Commissioners more laborious. I wish in every way I can to help, not to oppose ; I can sincerely say this. Neither have I any fears for the present, nor do I wish to bind the future in any absurd way. I am quite willing to face the axiom of modern politics that "the weaker must go to the wall." You will ask, then, what I do mean, and on what point I am fool enough to stake my all once more. Simply on this point, "that the thorough Church of England character of the work here (established or disestablished) be fully recognised now." That a record be made that the present school rose on this faith, and on the faith that a post-Reformation basis of operations set going by a country clergyman would be a guarantee against any common changes of religious kinds. If this is distinctly laid down, and this choice clearly put before men's minds, then if any after generation chooses to undo the work, alienate, confiscate, plough up, or anything they like, let them. I don't want even to try and stop them. But let them know what they destroy or change. Provided this kind of statement is put clearly I do not care whether it has any legal value or not. I quite agree with you on the difficulty there would be in practically unchurching a school like this, and if that was all I should not care to contest the question, neither shall I resist any clause or clauses which provides for this kind of *euθανασία*. If it is to die let it die. But I myself fully think that at no distant period a complete upheaval and readjustment of all English polity is at hand, and I wish in that hour of change and violence to have the generation know distinctly what Uppingham belonged to ; after that let them do what they like. This then is where I take my stand. . . . Of course if the present reform falls into the old groove, in which founders sinned, of making non-workers powerful, not giving the workers liberty, and tying dead weights round their necks, by degrees the life will go out of the new channels as it has done in so many cases from the old, but that is not my concern. I heartily wish in all things I can to forward the present reforms.

January 1st, 1870.—A kind letter from Lyttelton<sup>1</sup> to-day improving my position immensely, complaining of my viewing the Commissioners as "natural enemies," which enabled me to put out quietly my real views, and to show him a little of the inner life of things, and how serious a matter this legislation is to working men. Yet I daresay my definite, clear views of the subject expose me to much misapprehension, and that men think I am simply cantankerous when I see great principles at stake and a blind dealing with them. One thing certainly vexes me, the cool way these governing men with their positions above the working conflict come down as *di ex machinis*, quite unconscious of the intense interest these frog pâttings have for the frogs and of their own ignorance of frog life I see how impossible it is for a Government like ours to promote good except by *stopping evil*. How dangerous it is to meddle with liberty and work! . . .

TO LORD LYTTELTON.

*No date.*—Pray forgive me if my letters have seemed to you to breathe irritation. I can assure you it is nothing of the kind, but, as far as it is anything, simple *fear*. If you will have patience with me I will explain a little the situation I am in; perhaps then you will look on my proceedings as, at least, not unnatural. . . .

Sixteen years ago I came here and found a good basis, but only 25 boys, and no machinery for educating *them all* up to the university point, which I was compelled to do. I will say nothing of the deadly struggle, protracted for years, which fell to my lot when I faced this difficulty. Conceive what it has been during sixteen years to meet toil and danger of every kind; then at the end of that time, just when Uppingham itself as a school was secure, its machinery complete, its whole theory and practice in thorough working order, and I was gaining a little health and strength which had suffered seriously in the long effort, all at once I find the school and myself thrown out of their quiet onward movement into a great commotion of external power. I found in fact *my life*, with the best part of it gone, absolutely at the mercy of Parliament and this bill.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lyttelton had been an old Eton friend of Thrings.

You chaff me for calling myself old ; in your sense, of course, I am not old, yet even in your sense I was two years ago so used up that I doubted if ever I should be well again, and at that time was in fact thoroughly *old*. Now, thank God, I am not. Yet I am old to *begin* life again, which was what I said, and to leave my harvest of all kinds for a fresh sowing on new ground. You will probably before this, as you saw the first, have seen my yesterday's letter to Roby, which goes fully into the question which would make me do that. But I feel sure now there will be no need. Yet if there was, so far from thinking "the game up," or being hasty, I should do it in the firm conviction that if I lived I should be able to raise another Uppingham on a thorough basis of independent work for Christ's Church. As to haste, I have seen the *crux* coming on for months, and have never done anything in my life with greater deliberation. Indeed, a man who has spent the life of daily care and foresight I have done here never acts in haste.

. . . What would you feel if you stood alone as I do here, at seeing all you cared for once more at stake ? And permit me to add without any real clue to what is coming. For neither the Commission nor Parliament has as yet entered on the great trade question, of how the trade of school-keeping can be carried on so as to give to *each boy* in every school a fair chance. This is what I have lived for—the Government has not noticed it. They are busy about what subjects are to be taught before they have secured that any subject shall be taught to *every boy*, or any training be given to *every boy*. The great schools which fill the public eye, and are the most grievous sinners against this cardinal ABC of the alphabet of education, are only too glad to discuss *subjects* and escape investigation of *machinery*. Now my whole life, work, and convictions are bound up in this trade question which at Uppingham we have dealt with and settled. I have no fortune to fall back on, nothing but my work and my life. Would it not be a matter of intense interest to you if you saw a great external power under such circumstances—a power able to crush you utterly—advancing slowly on your life ? advancing on great trade questions without the personal experience of trade, and with the great authorities on such subjects the worst offenders ? This you know is my belief,

whether I am right or wrong. Can you wonder at my having been afraid? Can you wonder, I may now add, at the relief your kind letter has brought me this New Year's morning? A happy omen. I can assure you from my heart, what I think you are now able to believe, that I am not in a state of irritable feeling, but as far as I now fear, calmly anxious; very much more, however, hopeful and cheery; most of all eager and glad to do everything in my power to forward the good work you are engaged in; both in public and private ready to spare no pains to make it easier. . . . There is no fear that you shall accuse me again of even seeming to look on you as "natural enemies."

#### TO THE SAME.

*No date.*—No doubt the question of private property turns up in innumerable instances in connection with foundations. Nevertheless I have the strongest reason for believing that I am not mistaken in my view of Uppingham. Other schools have, as they grew and it became possible to do so, employed private property gradually, and when any large sum has been thus invested the expenditure has been spread over several generations, and most of the original contributors are in their graves. But Uppingham is an instance of a special school system, based on most distinct principles, being begun when a school was at its lowest ebb, carried out steadily through adversity and prosperity, till all the educational work has practically become quite independent of any necessity of foundation aid, though for reasons other than pecuniary such aid seems to me very important.

This work, too, has been done in one generation, and the men still live whose property and lives have been thus contributed to the work, when most unexpectedly Government steps forward to deal with the question. In the last sixteen years I have paid much attention to these questions, and I believe I am correct in asserting that there is no other instance where this same process has been carried through, and especially in the two facts of the amount thus invested in our generation, and that the contributors are alive the case of Uppingham is peculiar among foundation schools.

It was not so much intentional tyranny on the part of the Commissioners that he had to fear as their ignorance of the principles involved, or indifference to them. An internal danger was added. Assistant masters would be tempted, in any reconstruction of the trust, to seek better terms for themselves at the expense of the principles which he most valued. This could most easily be done by getting the restriction on the numbers in a single house removed.

After seeking advice on all sides—from the governors, from Thring himself, who gladly submitted what he thought a just and workable system, and from others—the Commissioners prepared and sent down in 1872 their draft scheme. Thring found at once that his worst fears were confirmed, that many of his main principles were ignored, and that if the scheme were adopted he could no longer consistently remain head-master of Uppingham.

His Diary becomes at this point the best guide to his feelings and views on the subject.

*November 27th, 1872.*—Truly life is hard. To-day I got down the draft scheme of our schools. . . . There are no less than three enactments left in, on any one of which I shall resign, besides sundry little things that are disgusting in a less degree. . . .

*November 28th.*—For the first time in my life I believe care kept me awake great part of the night. But, it is so wonderful, and it has occurred so often this year, I got up to read the Psalms as usual in school. Out flashed on my soul the first verse, “Lord, remember David, and all his trouble;” then the following verses describing so one’s life in the main. How my heart rose as I read it! God will not forget. Then when I came out of school my gallant-hearted wife said, “She had been very down, but suddenly it came across her that God had given me a resolute heart to fight for them, and fight for

Him I must ; that her father had died, been hunted to death by his Government superiors for true work, and she had asked in her fear whether God was going to take her husband also, but then she thought of my resolution and was comforted; but, at all events, that we must stand hard, come weal come woe, for our truths." This is wonderfully comforting, to know that if we have to turn out we shall go as always united in the family life. . . .

*November 29th.*—I gave the draft I drew to the masters, and we hold a meeting to-morrow. . . . I told them, what I mean to say to all to-morrow, that I wish there to be no mistake in the matter, that I felt sure there was not the slightest danger to our present success either from Endowed School Commissioners or governors ; we were quite secure, but that this was not the point I looked to. I had not worked here for twenty years to ensure this, but for the cause of education, and that for this I should now carry my point against the Commissioners or resign, but that it was well there should be no mistake in the ground taken up. But every master must judge for himself.

It struck me this afternoon how strangely like the Psalmist my life had been when he said, "Thou hast made my hill so strong I shall never be moved." These words had often come into my mind, and I had felt that though I knew God could, I did not quite see how He could overthrow the school for me, and I had felt that though I tried to be humble and to feel my weakness I did not quite succeed as I wished. I have got it now at all events.

*November 30th.*—A marvellous day—perhaps the most consciously marvellous that I have passed in my life. It goes back so far ; it covers so much ground ; it is such a centre-point of life backward and forward. It fills me with wonder, and, I trust, with faith too. First came the morning service in school, with its apposite and ringing psalm with its first verse. Then the Litany and Communion Service in chapel at ten. St. Andrew's Day, with its touching simple call to leave all and follow Christ. And the chapel itself, shall it be wrested from us? After chapel immediately the masters' meeting. . . . I began the meeting itself by stating that I thought a sober, unimpassioned conclusion ought to be

arrived at by each man, and especially that there ought to be no false impression, and I wished accordingly to state my strong conviction that nothing was further from the ideas of either Commissioners or later of governors than the intention of doing us any harm if we took their scheme, or a far worse scheme ; that they would favour us, crack us up, help us, and in every way forward the material success of the school. But that was not my view. I had worked for twenty years for given principles, and there were five things at least in the scheme as a matter of principle on any one of which I would resign. Then — said, "That was equivalent to giving in my resignation then and there. Did I think I was going to carry these points ?" I said I was not going to discuss that ; causes were advanced by overthrow as much as by victory sometimes. I had thought this crisis possible for years, and was now telling them what I meant to do. I had no doubt they might, with luck, be thoroughly prosperous and successful if they separated from me, accepted the scheme, and took another headmaster from the governors. I wished them to weigh this. Mr. Rowe, perhaps before this, asked, "If we all resigned with you, would you start a new school with us here ? Resigning need not mean leaving." I said I would give a perfectly honest answer. "I would not do so as chief of a joint-stock company, or on any terms excepting such as an amended scheme might give." They said they had the experience of the past, and knew my terms, etc. I said, "No, I could not lead them, and would not on such terms as the past." The terms would have to be settled before I accepted their headship, and I was particularly anxious they should see this clearly, as I would not have them say by and by that I had betrayed them. The matter was very serious ; there would be much subtle concession and argument ; we were a large company, and each man must judge for himself. I would not bind myself in any way, and it was quite possible as matters advanced that we might be anything but a compact body. . . . Then we proceeded to the business of my stating the five points on which I would resign. I began with the refusal to let us working men be represented by two governors. The battle-ground was the fact that we were living founders representing 95 per cent

of the annual outlay and plant. . . . That we stood alone in having living representatives of capital laid out over a series of years for a principle which, to some of us at all events, was much the reverse of profitable, whereas other schools had only invested money when it was profitable to do so. . . . There was some talk whether I would accept a compromise on this. I said I was open to some compromise on this head alone, provided the rest of the scheme was thoroughly satisfactory; but if not, I was, on principle, very strong for the rights of the working men, and should not give way. Then we went through the other points. . . . I don't know what will come of it; whether masters in a body will stick to me or not. They are good men as a body, . . . and if they see the principle some of them really would face the danger for the principle's sake. Again, boldness is as safe as cowardice; they may see that. Their risk, if I fail and go, is very great indeed. At all events, I have put before them clearly in a dispassionate way the whole question. There must be great searchings of heart with them as well as with me. It will sift the worldliness which was creeping over us thoroughly and keenly.

*December 1st.*—My sermon preached, my confirmation class done. Campbell to-day, when he came in with the alms account, gave in his adhesion. "He always meant to go if I went; he did not want to serve under any other headmaster. He could not with his family bind himself, but he certainly should not stay a moment longer than he could help if I went." This cheers me, but I am most comforted by having got out in so quiet a way without a word of discussion the broad, clear view of the choice now before them, and of my position and intentions. If they hold to the cause and to me they do so without a single expression to move their feelings, or win them to my side. . . .

*December 3rd.*—How it has gone to my heart of late years to see the work and the truth of it gradually overlaid and encrusted, and anything I said of past sacrifices like words to the lotus-eaters, and more and more blindness and carping and rebellion daily, and the life of the place slipping through my fingers, and all in danger of being really only a successful speculation, instead of a living truth! And now comes this

sharp sword cutting asunder all their cobwebs, and bringing them face to face with the great choice, principle, or safety, though it is more mercifully or less mercifully put than that, since principle is really the safest. . . . I trust I may conquer. I should feel more confident if the Commissioners were not so knowingly ignorant about schools. Ignorance in power cannot afford to discriminate. One sheep is the same as another to a man who is not a shepherd.

TO LORD LYTTELTON.

*December 6th, 1872.*—I have no objection to telling you anything. It is with much concern that I find myself adding to the troubles of your office, and I beg you will believe that I am in every way anxious personally not to stand in the way of the Commissioners. But I have now for twenty years been slowly working up what I believe to be a truth, and I cannot betray it now. The scheme as sent down to me has sundry provisions in it under which I could not continue here as headmaster. I must explain what I mean by this. I have no fear for immediate success; as long as the school is in its present healthy, robust state all would go well externally, for the simple reason that none of the obnoxious clauses of the scheme would be brought into action. I wish, therefore, to lay down very distinctly that I am not contending in any way for my own present loss or gain when I join issue on these matters. Quite the contrary; the loss to me of resigning at my age I had rather say nothing about; the gain of staying is certain. But this is not the question. The cause I have lived for is, in my judgment, endangered; the moment I cannot continue to work for my cause, I must give way to some one who thinks differently. That I see clearly, and shall not shrink from doing it.

In its general form my position is simple. It is this. Every great profession is full of complicated professional knowledge, and requires skilled workers of a high class.

I claim that the skilled workers, each in his own trade, shall be well represented in the management of the trade, and not interfered with by external unintelligent power in carrying on the trade. In other words, the function of

governors, even if there was a provincial council to act instead of the present strange arrangement, is, in my opinion, strictly confined to seeing that the schools do their duty within certain strict laws, and no governor or council, short of the highest in the kingdom, should have absolute power to alter at will the structure and character of a school. If this is true when public money is being dealt with, it becomes an injustice of the gravest kind to violate it when a school has been re-founded, as Uppingham has been, without any fear of such interference, and has given a large amount of property to the governing body on a different understanding, and could at once, if this property, as is just, is returned when the compact is broken, cast off the foundation entirely, and even without this can do so if compelled by terms it will not and cannot submit to. There are sundry things in the scheme which practically give absolute control of the construction of the school to the governing body, and that deadest of all dead hands, the hand of living external force, can at any moment be applied to the heartstrings of the work and the workers here. My cause is lost if anything of this kind is left in the scheme. But there is no power that can compel me to pull down my life-work myself. I have thought over this subject for years and calmly made up my mind long ago. But though rather surprised at seeing none of the suggestions I had made incorporated in the scheme, I thoroughly believe that you and your colleagues will do us justice, and nothing can be further from my wish than to embarrass your very difficult and anxious task in any way that I can avoid.

*December 8th.*—Marie asked me to-day what I should do if turned out, and we just talked the matter over a little. If nothing turns up I mean, please God, to take a few little boys.

Up to this time he had been in doubt as to what the attitude of the masters as a body would be.

*December 19th.*—On Tuesday morning I received a really precious document, a paper declaring my claims as re-founder of this school, and their determination to back me to the best of their power, signed by all the masters. I wrote short notes

to Rowe and Earle saying I would send an official answer next day, and thanking them.

The document here referred to was as follows:—

*December 16th, 1872.*—We, the undersigned masters of Uppingham School, considering

- (1) That Mr. Thring has been headmaster for nearly twenty years;
- (2) That when he came the school consisted of about 25 boys, and that it now consists of about 400;
- (3) That from the first the school has been worked at great risk and expense upon definite principles, considered by Mr. Thring and by all of us to be of vital importance, and that to the working of these principles the success of the school is due;
- (4) That of the present school buildings the Trust has contributed  $8\frac{1}{4}$  per cent, and Mr. Thring and his masters  $9\frac{1}{2}$  per cent;
- (5) That the school is thus virtually a new foundation and Mr. Thring the founder;
- (6) That "the efficiency of a system depends for the most part upon the living power that sets and keeps it in motion" (Bishop Fraser), and that this living power cannot be created, but may easily be destroyed, by a scheme imposed *ab extra*;

are strongly of opinion that Mr. Thring's judgment on the new scheme has a special claim upon the respect of the Commissioners, and are ready to back him to the best of our power on all points of the scheme which he considers to be of vital importance.

But assistance soon afterwards came from a quarter whence Thring had little expected it.

*February 23rd.*—A wonderful day! a day that repays years of toil, besides the calm confidence and hope it gives for the future. It is as if a great door had opened out of a narrow passage and shown me suddenly the hidden things of life behind me and in front. Mr. Jacob from Liverpool and Mr. Lowndes have been here. They have only had boys here this half-year, but it is impossible for me to give any idea of

the earnestness and zeal they show, or of the way the school has caught hold of them and their friends. It was like a dream hearing Mr. Jacob talk of the consternation that the thought of Uppingham being broken up had caused ; how the Nonconformists had declared themselves ready to do anything ; and, in fact, the wonderful effect that the quiet work here has had. They are ready to get up at once a parents' memorial ; I am to send them the addresses. . . . If it is necessary, they will fight the matter in both Houses of Parliament ; they have sounded their members who will undertake it. In Manchester people are working with them, so that I find a great and powerful confederacy able to force almost anything rising out of the work itself as if by a magician's wand. "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith ?" Indeed, how I deserve this reproach. My King has never left me to be a prey. All this trial is developing greater life and power, and brightening what seemed to be so dreary. As for me I cannot realise it. To hear the deep feeling with which Mr. Jacob talked of the school almost made me feel as if I was an impostor, and that he would find me out, and so indeed I am, if that was all, and I might well fear ; but the Master I serve is no impostor, and His work will not be found out, and as I have worked for Him I feel there is truth even if it is not in me. Mr. Jacob said he would finish by telling Canon Robinson "that if the Commissioners broke up Uppingham by forcing me to resign, they would carry off the boys and found it anew elsewhere, and leave them empty walls only. . . ."

What strength and comfort has come to me out of this trial ! How bright the past looks when I see what fathers, men of such sense and power, think of it, and how deeply they feel, and how earnestly they support the work ! How the future brightens with such assurance of God's blessing ; how small my cares look ; how rich the recompense ; how worthy of any labour ! . . . How it strengthens me for to-morrow, and makes my position with the governors one of independence and patronising rather than being patronised !

*March 1st.*—Another week over ; a wonderful time. Whatever comes of it a new world has opened up for me—a certainty of security and power and blessing on work unknown before. So the Israelites after all their trial and backslidings

in the wilderness must have felt on the evening of their first great battle won. Then the dim feelings and sad lessons and half-perceived truths and gathering faith must have had a birth hour into conscious strength and perception of God on earth as well as in heaven. I trust I have felt it before, but do feel as I never have before that the victory is in my hands now. May God give me strength to bear it and to feel it more and more. If I could but tell what I know of God's love and Christ's glory.

*March 22nd.*—It is settled by my allies to try and overthrow the scheme entirely on Church grounds. I am so thankful that this which I thought impossible is to be done. God has raised up a power to do it.

*May 1st.*—This morning (may it be an omen) the summons to meet the Commissioners next Wednesday came. God give me wisdom and strength to do His will. J. H. Green was here yesterday to report over his examination by the Committee of the House of Commons. He tells me they ask much about Uppingham, and give out that the Commissioners will settle with us, and that we have no intention of coming to a rupture or fighting. We shall see.

The interview with the Commissioners took place on 7th May, and he reports its results a few days later.

To W. T. JACOB.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE, UPPINGHAM,  
12th May 1873.

I will now give you a little gossip about my interview. When I went in, after taking my seat, almost immediately Lord Lyttelton blurted out that it was clear we had no *locus standi* under the Bill to be made an exception, and they quoted the governors' memorial, and proceeded to argue there was no present danger in the present scheme. I said to this that I wished to state at once that I apprehended no present danger either on Church or on other matters ; that I felt sure in my day the school would go on under a far worse scheme than the one in my hand perfectly satisfactorily. But I wished before I said another word to state distinctly that I was not contesting anything in my own interest, quite the contrary, but with a view

to the future, and to times when the school might be weak. Then Lyttelton pressed me whether I thought we had any *legal claim* under the Bill. I answered to the effect that I was not there to pass judgment, or even to express any opinion on legal claims ; that I was not there to state our case, our just demands, and what we were prepared to do. It was for others to decide on this legally ; it was their part, not mine, to consider that question. Then they began pressing me about the legal view. I answered to the effect that we considered both on the terms of the original foundation (which I went into), and also on the terms of my work in faith on that basis we had an irresistible claim in equity to be considered ; that we were prepared to fight this claim step by step, and in every possible way bring forward our just right both in Parliament and elsewhere.

There was some discussion about the effect of the present scheme and the unlikeness of any alteration of the Church character in consequence. I answered that I would state candidly that if I was sure that the Church of England would not be disestablished, I should be willing to trust to the spirit of the place, the spirit of the country, the chapel, and unseen powers ; but that if the Church was disestablished, it was clear that any school which had its connection with the Church broken off now, would be seized at once by the State then as *ipso facto* already State property, and that was worth contending for.

Lyttelton here broke in brusquely, "That is speculative and a great jump." I answered, "Perhaps ; but these are days of jumping ; we are getting familiar with great jumps, and it is necessary to provide for jumps in these jumping days." He said, "Do you mean to say you will go on even if you are not one of the exceptions provided for in the Bill ?" I answered, "Certainly we should." He said, "That is like running your head against a wall." I answered that that was exactly what we meant to do ; we are going to run our heads against a wall if necessary. Then or soon after he left, and Canon Robinson and Roby continued the discussion.

Roby said in the course of the argument he could not understand how we differed from other schools, Rugby, for example, where all the houses were private property also. I explained that at Rugby and at similar schools, when the school had flourished, it had been found advantageous to build houses,

and thus in a generation or two the school became great because it was profitable, and that the original speculators in building were all or most of them dead and passed away before the school attained its greatness ; but that at Uppingham I had started the school on a given principle to work out my belief in honest work, and had worked it at a great loss through evil days with those who joined me ; that any man of business who would examine the question would see that when I began on the plan I did begin on, if that plan was persisted in, and it has been persisted in, no possible success could be so successful as the going on on the plan of the old scheme, without risk, whilst to fail was to be ruined ; that this system and school had been completed by me in one generation, and I was there to claim this. Canon Robinson summarised this argument in a very neat sentence. "I see, he said, "at Rugby the school made the houses, and at Uppingham the houses made the school." "Exactly so," I said ; "that represents the pivot of the thing completely." Then Roby objected that Mr. Gathorne Hardy had stated before the Committee of the House that there had been a new endowment of £70,000, whereas only £13,000 had been given to the Trust, and all the rest was private property. I answered to this effect, that even put in the way in which he put it, it was fair to throw in my twenty years of life and all the money I had sunk in working the school up to its present state, though I had not a brick to show for it. . . . I then said, "Suppose we put it in another way, and say if you give us back what we have given to the Trust and allow us to pay the balance on the schoolroom of £3000, we will give you no more trouble ; we will throw up the endowment at once, and start to-morrow on our own basis." Canon Robinson then smiled and said, "A mutual friend of ours, Mr. Thring (you), did come to me the other day and ask whether it was not possible to buy out the foundation, and proposed to do it." "Yes," I said ; "that is the true way of putting the case." "But what about the exhibitions," said Roby, "which you laid such store by?" "Oh," I said, "the exhibitions are nothing to us, we can re-establish them to-morrow." "Can you?" said he. "Yes," I answered, "in a matter of that kind I command the market absolutely and should not have the slightest difficulty."

"Then," he said, "you don't care for the endowment?" "Not from that point of view in the least," I answered; "but I care intensely for the good man's foundation, the antiquity, the old house; the spirit and all the language of the past to which I attach such importance in education, and believe in so much. . . ."

At last I succeeded in bringing out clearly that if the skilled workmen, taking a series of years, could not do their own work, most certainly unskilled external power could not; I explained also that I did not want to make the professional man the ultimate judge, but simply to throw the responsibility of working well on him, when the kind of work to be done had been assigned. That then the instrument must work in its own way, and bad laws well carried out in such a case were better than good laws badly carried out; that I acted on that principle with my assistant masters in letting them work, and I claimed the same liberty for myself; and I made a strong distinction between supervision which I admitted, and interference and power of initiating and prescribing which I said nothing should ever induce me to work under. The up-shot was the doctrine of non-interference and supervision was admitted, and they declared themselves ready to modify all the obnoxious clauses. . . .

Once more a thousand thanks for all your support, which has, I may truly say, completely altered the whole world and its bearings for me at this trying time, and cheered and strengthened me wonderfully.

There was still a long and troublesome path to travel over, but in the end the chief points for which Thring contended were embodied in the constitution of the school. Its church character was maintained; the masters secured due representation on the governing body; the internal management of the school was not given to amateur rulers, but to the headmaster and his staff—the skilled workers. The final settlement of the question came during the storm and stress of the great migration to Borth. In the pressure of difficulties which came upon him at that time Thring was more careless

about his own business interests in the school than of the great principles on which it was conducted.

His energy, zeal, and organising capacity had built up a great school ; he had not merely sacrificed time and strength, but he had risked his own means in placing it on a firm foundation. If ever man had a right to reap the practical fruits of success, Thring had. But in his anxiety to safeguard fundamental principles this was little thought of.

Meanwhile, it cheered him to feel that the strong stand which he had taken for Uppingham would make the future safer for other schools.

To W. F. RAWNSLEY, ESQ.

BEN PLACE.

*July 5th, 1873.*—I have no doubt that Uppingham, as you say, furnished the backbone, for the simple reason that no other school either could or would hold out on any distinct principle. It was with them a mere scramble for a little more money, or a little more patronage in a blind way, with no solid power of intelligent, unselfish knowledge. If we had given way, everything else was limp, and all would have been lost. I felt very strongly the cause of true education and skilled work was at stake ; and probably far more than we are at all aware of, the fact of Uppingham standing firm for principle has been a turning-point, so far at least as preventing an unresisted downward drag, and suggesting that there was a true principle of school life of a definite kind. It was worth any risk to uphold at this epoch intelligent views which were real and could not be talked down. On the most important points of school management all the great schools had already given way and quietly accepted the dead hand of ignorant external power, and the dead weight of the idea that the skilled workman can be told by such potentates how he is to do his own skilled work. This is deadly. To prevent this is a cause worth fighting for, and now I can breathe again. I thank God for the past year with all its pain, and revelations, and shaking. There will be more life, more strength, better work for it.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HEADMASTERS' CONFERENCE

THE Conference of the headmasters of public schools has now become a body of recognised influence in England ; the deliberations at its annual or biennial gatherings are watched with deep interest by the public and seriously discussed by all the leading journals : it provides a common channel through which the secondary school life of the country finds a voice for its opinions—the only parliament in which its perplexities can be discussed, the experience of masters compared, the relations of the public schools to the educational movements of the time considered. Doubtless the significance and weight of the Conference are fluctuating quantities, and at any particular period will be determined by the activity of educational thought and progressive spirit, or the amount of individual energy among its members. Whether it has quite fulfilled, as a stimulant to educational movement, the hopes of its founder may be questioned. But that it has broken down a deadening isolation, induced a healthy interchange of ideas between public schools, given them a united voice in time of need, exercised a powerful influence on various educational questions, and that it is capable of much further development for good, there

can be no reasonable doubt. Within a few years of its inception it had secured the adhesion of all the great schools, and at its meetings was being welcomed and splendidly entertained by each of the most important of them in turn.

But when the organisation of the Conference was first suggested by Thring, the welcome which the idea received was by no means universal, as I shall have to show. The inception and growth of the plan in his mind can be pretty fully traced in his Diary and in fragments of correspondence. It was suggested by a meeting of masters called for a special purpose. In the recollections of Thring which Bishop Mitchinson has furnished, his Lordship thus mentions this meeting and its result :—

We were brought into contact on another interesting question,—a *rapprochement* destined to produce far-reaching results. The Endowed Schools Bill was before Parliament : it contained important provisions of a somewhat drastic character, largely concerning the future of grammar schools, and the fortunes of their masters ; no common action was being taken, and none seemed likely to be taken. Although, therefore, I was but an insignificant member of the craft, I ventured to invite a considerable number of my brother headmasters to meet at the Freemasons' Tavern in London. The meeting was well and influentially attended : we discussed the bill, framed resolutions, and by deputation interviewed Mr. Forster, then Vice-President of the Council. At the close of the second meeting to receive the report of the deputation, Thring rose and, after commenting on the utility and pleasantness of such a gathering, proposed that it should become an annual institution, and then and there invited the first Public Schools Conference to Uppingham the following December. At Uppingham we met in the cruellest winter weather ; but it was forgotten in the hospitality we experienced, and in the interest that was aroused and sustained throughout the gathering. I travelled down in company with Dr. Weelton,

then headmaster of Tunbridge ; as we traversed the dreary, sodden, mist-clad country he kept repeating at intervals, "Thrинг must be a wonderful man to have made a school like this in the midst of such a howling wilderness" !

We may now turn to his own views in connection with the preliminary meeting to which reference has been made, and the motives which influenced him in taking a further and more decisive step.

*February 25th, 1869.*—This afternoon on coming out of third school, found a letter from Mitchinson<sup>1</sup> of Canterbury, wanting the headmasters of the endowed schools to meet in Oxford or London, and confer about the proposed bill, but I have written to say I cannot go. I like Mitchinson, but the fact is, first, much as I disapprove of the Government move, yet my objections do not belong so much to the bill itself as to the muddle they have made in glorifying the seven schools ; and in the second Commission not raising the question even of what is a good school. . . . But then there is no opening for expressing this. Then, on the other hand, I suppose of the men who will meet not one really fully agrees with my school views, many are deeply pledged against them, so I don't want to identify Uppingham and myself with them. Lastly, as Uppingham stands alone, I must either lead or be in a false position, and as I am sure I should not lead in such a Conference, I can at least avoid being in a false position. The fact is, for many months I have turned over every contingency in my mind, and see no possible chance of anything but sitting still and working on quietly as long as we are left alone, as nothing but an amount of power which no one will dream of offering to one so insignificant as myself would make any other course wise. But we will not forecast too much ; "sufficient for the day." There is here a noble progressive work. As long as that remains nothing more is needed.

*March 1st.*—A day I fear much to be remembered by me. A letter this morning from Mitchinson with a strong personal appeal to me to attend the meeting in London to-morrow. And so all my well-considered arguments are beaten down, and I cannot think it right not to go and say my say, and

<sup>1</sup> Headmaster of Canterbury School—Bishop of Barbadoes.

perhaps I launch out into a sea, and this is the last night of unmolested work I may pass for years—unmolested in spirit. I feel a solemn dread mixed with the excitement of change. And I bless God for having allowed me external rest to carry through the deadly struggle here, and then giving me a pause, a calm for a little time to recover strength and nerve before the certain vexation and possible great and trying conflict now before me has come on. . . .

*March 3rd.*—Back from London. Much pleased at having gone. Found twenty-five or twenty-six of the best masters there—Mitchinson, Harper, and others, and on the whole the meeting was very satisfactory. I never saw so little time wasted, and on the whole so much good sense shown. I was very much struck with the general appearance and behaviour of the men. A deputation is to wait on Mr. Forster next week. I shall not go unless Mitchinson wants me to undertake some special thing. We passed sundry resolutions and made suggestions. I feel a sense of support, if nothing else, from having met those men.

*March 4th.*—Wrote to Mitchinson saying I was glad I had gone, and suggesting that we should combine and have an annual meeting at Christmas, taking each time some one of our schools as the place of rendezvous, I receiving them at Uppingham this year. I hope this will be approved, as we want more communion and intercourse.

*March 12th.*—Came back from London to-day. The deputation was received very courteously, and seems satisfactory. But by far the most satisfactory thing to me was that I have got a school congress to meet every year at a school, and next Christmas at Uppingham (D.V.) the first will be held. May God bless this great working step. All the masters present signed the paper agreeing to this, so sufficient weight has been gained to make it certain. This may and will, please God, be the beginning of a great work, which may have more beneficent power than any Acts of Parliament. May God help us.

*March 15th.*—Uppingham and one or two other schools mentioned by Walter in his speech on Mr. Forster's bill, as equally good with the seven schools "to say the least." I have not seen the speech yet. . . . I don't wish to get classed

with the seven schools for many things. I sympathise with those below, not with those above, and I should work to aid them.

*March 20th.*—Sent off to-day a schedule of school classification to Mr. Forster.<sup>1</sup> I daresay it will go into the waste-paper basket, though it deserves attention. No other plan is true. Also to Harper; I wonder what he will say to it.

*March 23rd.*—I had a most satisfactory note from Mr. Forster himself to-day, saying he would take my paper with him during the Easter holiday and study it carefully. Now, whatever comes of it I feel more at ease, *liberavi animam meam*. If it is to be, well, and if it is not to be, I hope still I can honestly say, well.

*April 4th.*—Solemn thoughts in my heart to-night about this great new epoch opening before me in school life. Perchance I may be spared much additional temptation and left to work my work fairly quietly, perchance I may be drawn into the whirling stream of conflicting interests and ignorance, as I seem to be getting. God help me. Let me not perish in prosperity and temptations of vanity after having got through the hard agony of those ten years. God help me and mine.

*October 22nd.*—A very useful and cheering letter from Harper this morning. He wishes me to try and get masters of all kinds together at Christmas, so I have prepared a missive to-day and sent it to be printed, and hope to get it off next week. It is a bold stroke. I think I am sure of enough acceptances to make it a beginning, even if the great schools hold off. May God bless it.

*October 29th.*—To-day sent off all my invitations to the headmasters; two, Rugby and Rossall, kept back, as the places are vacant. I wonder how the schools will answer. I am not thin-skinned about it. If they won't combine they won't. If they will, my position as the leading school under this bill makes me the fittest person to send out a summons.

The circular thus sent out, and which outlined his ideas about the Conference and its aims, is as follows:—

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE, UPPINGHAM,  
23rd October 1869.

The whole question of education and school is exciting much attention.

Government is dealing with school bye-laws recently passed, other measures are contemplated, and future Governments will most assuredly take up the question.

Nothing has been more remarkable than the absence of any decided voice from the great body, whose work is being handled by external power.

Yet a profession, involving experience and practice of the most varied and intricate kind, ought not to be without a common voice under such circumstances.

The reasons of this difficulty are not far to seek. The pressure of continuous heavy work, and the wide area over which schools are scattered, are the two most obvious.

The first obstacle must remain; but the second can at least be mitigated, if not entirely removed, by choosing alternately a school north and south of London as a place of meeting. This plan also gives, year by year, new interest and practical knowledge of what is being done in different parts of England.

It is proposed, therefore, to hold a meeting, annually, of headmasters of schools, at the beginning of the Christmas holidays. Sundry important schools have assented to this plan. I invite, therefore, your attendance on Wednesday and Thursday, 22nd and 23rd Dec., at Uppingham, to consult as to what is best to be done.

After this the place of meeting will be decided, each year, on the plan mentioned above.

It is proposed to discuss school questions in such a manner as may be determined at the first meeting. . . .

That the idea of a Conference for the free discussion of school subjects jarred on the isolated habits and conservative tendencies of the greater schools especially was soon evident. The numerous refusals received proved that the Conference would have to justify its own existence.

Speaking to the Association of Headmistresses eighteen years later about the small beginnings of the Conference, and of the response to his first invitation, he said :—

It was called together after much searching of heart, from a deep conviction that all the skill of the skilled workmen of English schools were truly lying, like the seed in the parable, scattered by the wayside for the birds of the air to peck at and devour, and for amateur authority to trample under foot. All lay helpless ; there was no defence, no union, no central life that could speak and move. Any risk was better than this. So with many misgivings, with a very resolute and yet very cowardly heart, that meeting was called together. Between sixty and seventy invitations were sent out, and twelve finally came.

The excuses were various, and a curious study. How often in my working life have I been reminded of Ovid's line : “*Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsae.*” For how are the judges judged, especially when inspecting their inferiors, as they think, and dealing out self-satisfied superiority with complacent skill. Well, twelve came. And we can glory at this hour that only twelve came—so big a tree has now grown out of it, and so many branches on every side.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing was further from Thring's thoughts than that the Conference should grow into an arbiter of school methods or a censor of existing systems. Of this he was compelled later to give decisive proof. In order to remove any such impression, and to define the real purpose of the Conference, he added a note to the agenda paper sent out for the first meeting :—

The headmasters have been asked to come together under no idea of a single meeting being any great good, but in the hope that year by year the seeing different schools, learning each other's difficulties, hearing the views of thoughtful, educated men, making acquaintance with one another, and

<sup>1</sup> Address to Headmistresses, June 16th, 1887.

enjoying a little intercourse, may tend in time to bring about, if not a common consent on main points, at least a kindly feeling and readiness to give help and counsel.

*Dec. 18th.*—Now the masters' meeting is close at hand. I am well satisfied at the men who are coming. All the best endowed schools. This is an excellent beginning if anything is to come to it . . .

I think the school is in very sound heart. This cheers me. The masters coming on Tuesday are: Harper—Sherborne; Pears—Repton; Welldon—Tunbridge; G. Butler—Liverpool; Wratislaw—Bury; Stokoe—Richmond; Blore—Bromsgrove; Wood—Oakham; Mitchinson—Canterbury; Grignon—Felsted; Sanderson; Dyne—Highgate; Jessopp—Norwich; Carver—Dulwich. These will actually appear unless something unforeseen occurs. May God keep us all, and give us wisdom, and support and strengthen me in all dangers and difficulties.

*December 24th.*—The day come and gone, and most successful. Θεψ δόξα. On Wednesday morning I felt a unit; on Thursday morning a power, so completely has even this meeting altered things. Thirteen of us met on Wednesday, though two or three were not there at first. We met at ten, and I made a short address, explaining my views, and we debated on the formation of our . . . till one, when we lunched, and afterwards lionised till four. Two great dangers we escaped: one, Dr. —— wished to make concession to try and bring in the great schools, and tack us on to them. I laid down plainly that I thought it was simple death to do so; we rested on our vitality and work, they on their prestige and false glory: if they would meet us on common ground, well and good; if not, not. Dr. —— was very courteous, and so that danger passed.<sup>1</sup> The other was when I proposed

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion made was to appoint the headmaster of Eton president of the Conference for a certain number of years.

In the discussion upon this point Thring said:—"I cannot be suspected of not appreciating the great schools in any opinion I may express. I was nine years at Eton. I am a Kingsman, with my name still on the College books; I examined at Eton for four consecutive years for the election to King's, and am thoroughly sensible of the wonderful advantages of my old school. I speak of Eton as the one I am best acquainted with, and take

Sherborne as the next place of meeting. . . . When young, one thinks one's feelings are as sincere as they are strong, God wills it to make us work ; when older one finds out partly how false-hearted one is, and fears one is much worse than one expects, and a horror creeps up lest the seeming holy power one gains be apples of Sodom full of human frailty and dust, and the hearts one sways, and the high words one speaks, and the works one works, and which grow and influence and sway, be also corrupt and poison in a subtle way—all the more subtle because they seem good. O God, it is a wondrous thing to work for Thee, a thing full of grace and fear and love, and confidence and weakness, and all contradictions and searchings of heart. Only do thou accept me and this work. O Christ, purify and bless Thy work in us. Make us a brotherhood to be a light in England ; lift us not up, O Lord, as beacons, but as a saving clear light. . . . Make us Thine in these days of doubt and danger. . . . On the Thursday we discussed the school bill, and broke up, all

it as a type. But our cause, I conceive, is in one sense quite distinct from that of the great schools. We take our stand on work, and life, and progress ; and here, I think, for many reasons the true power is with us ; we are stronger than they, and should only injure ourselves by not asserting this. I perfectly understand the value of rank and wealth. To take a comparison, I for one distinctly see what an advantage it is to be Marquis of Exeter, Master of Burghley House, with a great fortune to support this position ; I am the last man to withhold from duke or marquis their honour or their power ; but, on the other hand, I can take an honest pride in being a schoolmaster, in my work, and my experience, and if school life is the question, then I cannot give way to rank, because it is rank, unless it is right, and has experience also. This seems to me the position somewhat of the great schools and ourselves. If they come in on the basis of working power and life we shall be glad, but we can acknowledge no other common basis. Eton I hold to be one of the most difficult and insoluble problems of the present day, not because the men who are working Eton want zeal or energy, or earnestness, but because they are hemmed in on every side by an unpleasant glory that belongs to the past, trammelled by a blind affection, which means contentment with old machinery and usages, and would show itself in a very different way if the shield was turned round. Our schools depend absolutely and entirely on the vitality of progressive work ; on this we take our stand ; on this we are prepared to challenge all comers, and I do think that true, hearty, and fairly untrammelled work on the one hand, and an obsolete glory, a trammelling prestige and intense difficulties in the way of true progress on the other, form a

of us much strengthened and encouraged. A happy Christmas Eve ; my little G—— so bright, and everything bright.

Thring was always anxious to acknowledge the great part taken in the foundation of the Conference by his friend Dr. Harper, in whose social tact and organising skill he found a most necessary supplement to his own enthusiasm. Of the second meeting of the Conference he makes this note :—

*January 10th, 1871.*—Returned yesterday from our visits at Sherborne, Hornbloton, and Clevedon. The meeting at Sherborne a splendid success. Harper, as I expected, did it in first-rate style. Mrs. Harper also admirable. Every one felt the gain of the social intercourse. The seven school delusion broken up. Winchester and Shrewsbury there ; Eton has joined since. A committee formed to look after school interests. In fact a great power is certainly started.

very awkward condition to begin with ; and if this is to be got over, as I hope, there seems only one way of doing it, to make life and progress the basis, and live in the hope that progress will prevail. If at the present moment we put ourselves in any attitude but that of simply inviting co-operation, there is but one other lot—we must be slaves. And that I do not feel inclined for. To me Eton seems the perfection of a school in external advantages, a fairyland (I speak with no comparison or disrespect to others). It has wonderful powers of a certain kind, and earnest men using that power ; but when I come to progressive work, the means of doing it thoroughly, and the chance of those means being seen and brought to bear, there I stop ; on that ground we stand better than they ; we are better able to work, more alive to the necessity of it, inclined to search and see, comparatively unfettered in carrying out our discoveries, and we do carry them out more effectually. If they are willing to join us on a basis of common life and progress, we are most willing to have them, but we do not want their name if the basis is not true. We wish to stand as representatives of living progress, and to keep our arms open to receive adhesions from all schools, the great schools especially, even if it be for a hundred years. No lapse of time, or unwillingness to recognise our Society, if it existed, ought to stand in the way in the least of our being always ready to give a friendly reception to a newcomer, whether he come late or early. I can say the great schools have been exceedingly courteous in all the communications which have passed ; I trust they will be willing to take our ground of thorough true life and progress as their ground, and meet us on it ; but so long as they cannot do so, if they cannot do so, their joining us will not be strength but weakness."

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May God bless its workings. I was very much struck with the superior style of the numerous masters present.

He watched with deepest interest the widening influence of the Conference, as it won general acceptance, and held its gathering at Winchester, Dulwich, Eton, Harrow, Marlborough, and other schools. In 1875 he writes to a friend :—

*Ben Place, Grasmere, July 9th.*—I sent you sundry lucubrations ; amongst them the Conference Report. I was not at the Conference. My dear old father died that week. Not very much was done . . . But the Conference has done good work, and, if nothing more, has shown the possibility of calling together the schools in the hour of danger. Most of all though, perhaps, it has utterly broken up the exclusiveness of the old schools, and created a feeling of friendliness and union among all schoolmasters. This in itself is a stupendous gain.

Reformer though he was, questions arose in the Conference from time to time on which he took the most resolutely conservative stand. He steadily resisted, for instance, a proposal to admit assistant masters to full membership, on the ground that those finally responsible for a school could alone rightly have voice and vote in a teachers' parliament. On this point his opinion prevailed.

In 1878 a more serious difficulty arose. It is worthy of mention, as illustrating his view of the necessary limitation to the functions of the Conference, and his method of individual action when a principle was at stake. In the agenda paper for 1878 a motion for applying to the Universities for exemption from learning Greek had been put down for consideration in the committee, of which Thring was a member.

“ I have written to Moss,”<sup>1</sup> he notes in his Diary on

<sup>1</sup> Headmaster of Shrewsbury School.

Nov. 8th, 1878, "to ask him whether we shall oppose it in committee or let it come on, and then take the sense of the Conference on the advisability of never permitting any question affecting the fundamental structure of school education to be discussed at our heterogeneous meetings. If this latter takes place and the amendment is lost, I shall resign my committee place and leave the Conference. But perhaps we shall weather this storm as many others."

The result of the meeting of the committee held to decide the question is best told in his own words:—

*November 27th.*—Well, Jex-Blake<sup>1</sup> voted with Moss and me because he thought these burning questions would lead to the disruption of the Conference. I, warmly supported by Moss, argued first that we were not a fit body to deal with questions of structure and dissect one another's schools, and I said that such a question as the Greek question would close the mouths of all men who like me believed it rested on differences of school structure, and that it was idle to talk of the benefit of discussion where the real question could not be discussed. I also said that we had no forms of proceeding for such discussions, and that if we had to make a shuttlecock for a couple of hours' talk of the inheritance of centuries which we held in trust it was entirely false in principle, and that we had no time. But they had made up their minds and we were outvoted, and the subject stands first for discussion. Then I meant to have moved an amendment, to test the Conference whether it would not refuse to discuss such questions of main structure. But I was cleverly dodged then by its being taken out of the list of resolutions, and merely put as a subject for discussion without voting, so I have to-day sent in the resignation of my seat on the committee, with a request that the President will acquaint the Conference, as is their due, with my reason for declining to serve them. Nothing else was left. I am, of course, very sorry, but for years I have made up my mind never to sit in company with men engaged in work on a

<sup>1</sup> Headmaster of Rugby—Dean of Wells.

false basis with no power to stop it. I am convinced much of the harm of the world has been done by men continuing to give their presence to things they are powerless to stop. . . .

When the Conference met it declined, in a resolution which named him as its founder, to accept his resignation. Many of the leading headmasters wrote privately to endorse this public resolution, and the terms in which they did so indicate the hold which he had gained upon the Conference :—

“ I really think that now we have a fair chance of keeping the Conference to useful work, if you will come back and strengthen the opponents of hasty change. Nothing could be more complimentary to yourself than the tone of the Conference, nothing more significant of the influence for good which you may exercise. I hope and trust you will say ‘yes.’ ”

“ I write a line to express a hope that you will reconsider your decision, and continue to serve on the committee of the Conference. I do not know that I as a single person have any right to do so, except this : I was one of the original thirteen who met in the schoolroom at Uppingham on the occasion of the first Conference ; and as the whole Conference justly looks upon you as its father and founder, so I think those of the thirteen who still survive as members of it may in an especial manner look upon ourselves as your children. As an act of *pietas*, therefore, I write to express a very earnest hope that you will not give up your place on the committee. I quite understand the motives which led you to offer your resignation, and knowing the opinion which you hold as to the action of the committee, I do not see how you could have acted otherwise than protest in the strongest way ; but now that the protest has been made, I do sincerely hope that you will consent to resume your place on the committee. It is not only that we shall lose your help as a member of that body (though I am sure that the loss would be felt to be a very great one), but all of us would feel much of the zest taken out of our meetings if one to whom we look up as our founder were no longer to take a prominent place amongst us.”

The principle for which he contended having been maintained his resignation was withdrawn. The following year he shared in the reception of the Conference at the ancient school of his boyhood. The event must have seemed like the crowning triumph of a project conceived in anxious fears ten years before. In a letter to his friend, T. H. Birley, Esq., he says :—

The Conference at Eton was a great success in putting the finishing stroke to its power and importance. I quite felt that henceforth, while there might be disruption, there was no risk of extinction. We were, of course, received very sumptuously—all our meals in the College Hall, and a grand soiree given by the Provost. . . . It was a very striking fact—some 140 head and assistant masters meeting at Eton—and marks a remarkable epoch.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EXTRACTS FROM DIARY

1870-1875

THE period covered by the two preceding chapters was crowded with other interests besides those there referred to, and these years were among the most laborious and trying of Thring's toil-filled life. The work of completing the school construction went steadily on. Problems of internal management were constantly arising to be dealt with. The process of reorganisation through which the school was passing, the doubt about its future, the decisive stand on great principles which Thring felt bound to take, the change from the old governing body to the new one, made it a time of unrest. In maintaining his principles and in carrying out his plans the relations between himself and his masters were sometimes severely strained. I shall have to speak of these relations in another place, but for the present it is enough to say that during these eventful years the idea of resigning his headmastership more than once entered Thring's mind. The completion of the external appliances of the school filled him with satisfaction, and he could face resolutely enough external attack, but internal opposition or lack of sympathy was a sore

vexation of spirit to a man of his ardent temperament. Success seems to have in some means weakened the vigorous and enthusiastic co-operation of early days, and the fact took away no small part of his happiness in success.

What has been said will explain a note of disappointment which runs through parts of his diary during this period. The shadow of coming disaster in sanitary matters is also seen. For the rest, many passages throw light upon his convictions on educational questions and his methods of school management.

*January 11th.*—Alas for the week that has passed. Little Leo Beale was taken ill of scarlet fever the day after we started, and after seeming to have it favourably, died on Sunday, and Mrs. Beale was taken ill on the Saturday also, but I am thankful to say she is doing well. Both were at the hospital . . .

*January 17th.*—. . . I have never felt so firm-hearted, so untroubled, so quietly resolute as now. And I thank God for it. I thank Him for giving me a breathing time, and filling my heart with courage and patience before the whirl begins again. I shall want it all before I have done, between work and battle, but I feel He will be with me.

*January 18th.*—I believe to-day there was in the *Times* what I may call the first personal thorough recognition of my working life from an educational quarter. . . . It is the first time I have been quoted as an authority by an eminent outsider, and it is a striking fact. There is much work cut out to be done. Honour and wealth serve to snub fools and save much friction. So I hail a little honour as so much clear gain.

*January 29th.*—What a strange being is man! Here am I going to write, writing this very moment about that which I am quite ignorant of myself. Such a strange mixture of meanness and honesty, faith and unfaith, cowardice and bravery, hardness and weakness, vanity and humility, that one is all at the same moment. One thing I see that I am very ungrateful to God for His great blessings, and meanly sensitive to temporary trifles,—that I find it very hard to attend to the detail of working life, and yet keep my heart broad and open

to the great impressions and results, very hard to feel the Christian truths which one believes to the bottom of one's heart.

*February 6th.*—The feeling of no boys in my own house<sup>1</sup> makes it quite like the holidays to me still, and I now know by experience for the first time the immeasurable difference between a boarding-house master and a teacher, and how absolutely necessary it is for a headmaster, at least, to have had boarding-house experience, or else all the depth and truth of the training power would be lost or non-existent. I find, too, the practical force of my theory that a day school is an entirely distinct institution from a boarding school, and a master in a day school is well paid at half the rate of a boarding-house master. . . . I shall be obliged now to put off my boys' return. Still very anxious about fever both in my own house and other houses.

*February 7th.*—We have been obliged to refuse boys this time. The school is full to the last degree.

*February 9th.*—A very nice letter from Mrs. Charles Kingsley this afternoon (her husband is in S. America), which cheered me. . . .

The intense relief of having no boys back in one's house is beyond expression. Yet what a loss in depth and true work there would be in not having boys in the house. How could I value the training part rightly? How direct, sympathise with, and rightly honour masters without this experience? . . .

*February 20th.*—This morning, perhaps, I should have begun with my old grumbling, "A weary week," etc. To-night I feel as if I never should grumble again, such a spirit has come on me. It is as if my eyes were opened by God to see the self-spirit pass away, and to be able with a clear glance to read truth. I feel so happy in the many blessings of being able to do His work, so strong now that for a time the self-mist has rolled off my soul, so ready for war, as if a great war was coming which God by His revelation of Himself to me, and of myself to myself, has been preparing me to fight in quiet, humble, unselfish faith. Not that the old temptations will not come back, but the memory of the clearer vision in my spirit to-night will come too, and the power to endure patiently

<sup>1</sup> On account of scarlet fever in the family.

the wounds to vanity and self-assertion, to resist idleness, and to rejoice in the blessings of my home and Christ's service. May God keep me and mine for ever. Amen.

*February 25th.*—Alas, to-night Walter Earle came in to say one of his little ones has the fever. Poor fellow, it is a great trial, and we are getting anxious for the school. It will be strange if, after so many years, just before we have a hospital, we are overwhelmed. I trust we have not been "worshipping our nets," and as we got our machinery better, thought less of God.

*March 4th.*—This evening Walter Earle and I settled the inscription for the east window: "First-fruits from Old Boys, A.D. 1870." *Laus Deo.* There was a wish to put my name up, but I stopped it for two reasons: first, it does not represent the true kernel of things, the work of God given by God; and, secondly, it reminds one of the inscriptions churchwardens stick up. We had a hearty laugh over it.

*April 4th.*—I was delighted this morning by Walter Earle bringing in a painted map of sentence analysis. In the first place it is an excellent idea; in the second, it shows they are thoroughly turning their minds to teaching, and I am at length successful in this, thanks to the Analysis. I am greatly pleased.

*April 28th.*—We are really so full even for Midsummer that it is useless putting names down any more. Θεῷ δόξα. How different from the old racking expectancy and too often hope deferred of a few boys coming.

*May 15th.*—An Indian newspaper mentioning *Education and School* in high terms. This may be good as out there they are not choked up with powerful shams as we. As soon as things are looked at on their own merits and on principles my system must conquer.

All through his school life Thring had a rooted aversion to newspaper discussion of school difficulties. This was not because he feared publicity, but because he thought discussion of this kind often defeated the ends of moral training. Having used his best judgment in administering the school discipline, he preferred to

be perfectly silent under criticism. The following paragraph refers to an outbreak of evil in the school, which he had thought right to crush with a stern hand.

*June 7th.*—An unpleasant note this morning from the editor of the *Stamford Mercury*, saying there were painful rumours about concerning expulsions and punishments here, and he thought a cautious paragraph from me might do good and save worse. I thanked him, but said I was unable to see my way to writing anything ; that I was only too well aware of the power of evil reports, but if it was to be, I could only just bear it quietly now as I had done in worse times. But it is very hard that nothing can be done without a lying or malicious curiosity publishing everything. It makes honest work very hard. Even now the prospect is by no means pleasant of a garbled account getting into the papers.

*June 12th.*—. . . To-day was a glorious day; 189 communicants ; 147 boys actually present. A most impressive and comforting fact. Skrine has got the Newdigate and Hamley a College scholarship. This is pleasant. . . .

*August 15th.*—Sir George Couper brought his second son on Saturday, and I had much talk with him yesterday, which left me immensely strengthened in spirit. When I see the deep conviction such a man as he is has of this work, and the gratitude he feels for having his sons here, my heart also realises more my purpose and its reality, the sense of which gets deadened and almost lost in the mud of Commissions and general jaw, so that one's faith half gives way. I feel now again what a noble work this is, and that my post is here, and I am content it should be here. May God bless us and strengthen us.

*August 28th.*—The boys home and a happy day. A collection for the sick and wounded ; special offertory, £28 : 12s. . . .

I feel so much nerved for work, and content to work on here in spite of all my troubles when I see the life a school like this has in these evil days.

*August 31st.*—A great encouragement this morning ; a letter from America from B—, who left a year or two ago,—

such a manly letter, telling us of his having schools for his negroes, and how well they work, and that the Americans don't like the negro schools, but please God they will do good. Altogether so refreshing to find such a fellow a pioneer of good in a strange land. It has cheered me greatly.

*October 3rd.*—I never realised before to-day how completely the righteous work of having the classes not too large limits the numbers of a school. It has been brought home to me by the talk of fresh houses. We cannot have fresh houses without getting parallel classes, which are a great evil. I have determined, therefore, only to sanction the building of one house, and so not to increase the school ultimately at all.

*October 10th.*—Played fives to-day ; Dory Bell and I against the school. Lost, but not ignobly ; the first time we only got eight or ten, the second fourteen, the last we won. But I paid for it by a sick headache, and I fear it is the last game I shall ever play in consequence. It is hard to give up the last reminiscence of youth, but perhaps in one's forty-ninth year, and near the end of it, one may be well content to have a reminiscence of this kind.

*October 11th.*—I must get the hospital rules printed and send them to each master. That will keep them in some order. I gave out strongly this morning that under three weeks in measles, and six in scarlet fever, however light a case might be, a boy should not come out of quarantine, and also that no boy should be sent home. Parents might come and take boys home, and in some cases have them sent home, but the initiative should not come from a master. This was to check men getting rid of boys to escape trouble. It is very trying governing in a school. There is always a leak somewhere. You cannot deal with human beings like bales of goods, neither can you be everywhere yourself to see that things go right.

*October 12th.*—To-day two parents came to inspect ; a Mr. P—, an Irish barrister of eminence, and a Mr. C—, a clergyman. Spent a good deal of time with them. Mr. P— a particularly pleasant fellow. After various talk, he told me he had an intimate friend, a lady, at Cambridge, and that she, at his desire, had inquired of the authorities at all the Colleges in Cambridge of the character of Uppingham men,

and that there had been but one answer everywhere, that it was exceptionally good morally. This is very cheering, though we have heard it before. This is something worth working for. Θερ θόξα.

*October 16th.*—Very pleased on Friday to find that my house had got up a little entertainment of their own on Friday evening,—four of them, including my captain, Cameron, having practised some good songs to sing. We went in all of us as audience. . . . When I think of what a schoolboy's idea of a holiday evening amusement, and singing in particular, would have been in my day I could not feel too thankful for what I saw. . . .

*October 25th.*—Some of the masters this morning made a dead set at me on the subject of raising the terms. I met them resolutely and quietly. I contested their figures, and challenged any one to show by actual figures in detail that they got less than £1000 a year, boy expenses paid, with a full house. Then I took the argument about building houses which was advanced, and said I was not concerned with that. Since quite the beginning every man had built because he wished to. I had nothing to do but sanction it, and had not encouraged any man, and the early men I had rewarded by large concessions, . . . so that their risk was minimised. I said whilst I would give anything I could for good work, and only wished I could do more, if they were going to debate the trade question I should argue it like a thorough old Jew, and I repudiated utterly that success, as such, gave them the slightest claim for higher pay. In that sense it was no trade; they came on a certain basis which success did not affect. I said that their only actual argument was the actual rise in provision and wages which I was not inclined to put so high as they did. . . . I intimated that I would not raise now in this intermediate state; that I thought it would be very impolitic to do it; but that I should use every endeavour before the Commissioners to get us higher terms, as on principle I thought the first endowed school ought to be at a good level.

*November 6th.*—Nothing is harder for a ruler than the having to deal with a vexatious incapable who yet is not incapable enough to make it just to get rid of him.

*December 4th.*—Another case of fever in my house to-night. I am so down about it, and, what is worse, feel so rebellious in my heart against it, so unsubmissive, that I am shocked at it. It is such a disappointment just when we hoped all was going to be free. Such a blow and additional work and worry, both of body and mind, that I cannot bear it calmly, and yet how little it is ; what a nothing ; how thankful I should be for this if it was really a heavy sorrow. I am ashamed at myself and vexed, and yet so impatient. School life seems so hard with these immeasurable responsibilities. Such a perpetual struggle and so little rest. Yet I have many blessings, very many, very, very many. O God have mercy on us, and make us love Thy will.

*December 16th.*—Last night I wound up the school, and spoke strongly on the sordid point of looking on prizes as motives to work instead of records of having worked.

*February 26th.*—Mr. Bell came on Wednesday, and spent Thursday, giving us a nice lecture on the Boys' Home. We collected £19 : 13s. for him this offertory. . . .

*February 27th.*—Apportioned the gardens to-day ; about forty-two given away as yet. They are beginning to look very nice as the paths are getting fairly forward. It gave me great pleasure. . . . Everybody seemed to be delighted. It really will be very pretty when finished. I myself rejoice exceedingly at having got it set going at last.

[The gardens here referred to consisted of a few acres of land—"Fairfield"—which Thring himself bought and planted. A portion of the ground was divided into garden-plots, and these were allotted at a small rental to boys who cared for the cultivation of flowers. An aviary, in which a considerable collection of the smaller native birds was gradually got together, was added later, and furnished additional opportunity for creating a taste for natural history. Gardens and aviary were alike parts of his general plan of having around the school a variety of appliance for giving boys of varying taste happy and interesting occupation.]

*March 20th.*—Back from Harrow this afternoon after a most interesting visit. Dr. and Mrs. Butler exceptionally hospitable and anxious to welcome me. Mrs. Butler charming ; just the genuine, fresh, womanly simplicity that is both beauty

and work in one. Met old Munro<sup>1</sup> there, a most unexpected pleasure. He charged me like a bull on the Latin pronunciation question to my great amusement. Several of the masters invited to meet me. The singing in Harrow chapel was very hearty. Preached to the boys at evening service.

*March 22nd.*—A most comically triumphant day. The P—s were brought over here to lunch by Mr. —, my governor, a good man, a gentleman, and intelligent, but who has never seen the school, though he has been some six years or more a governor, and has been here at their meetings every year. Well, A— and I showed them all over, and I have scarcely left off laughing since they left at Mr. S—'s gradual illumination as we went on. It is impossible to narrate except at great length and as a literary amusement, which I have no time for. But the manner in which he began discussing educational questions *ex cathedra* at luncheon, and subsided by degrees as he heard and saw more and more, was enough to make a cat laugh. But what a satire on human life and English enlightenment, that a real gentleman as he is, and no fool, should, after so many years in office too over me, come here in supreme ignorance of everything!

*April 28th.*—Went to see Walter Earle's house. He really is carrying out our principles in a very true way. The boys' part is the best both internally and architecturally—in the elevation. This is very good, and shows heart work and feeling for the cause. I care for this. It is worth much. . . .

*May 13th.*—An important meeting this morning. A very important one in sundry particulars. The English question was discussed with a temper and quiet good sense quite new. . . . I quite felt a new feeling of having a body of men able to be dealt with, and willing to work together as an organised body. I trust it may be so. The result was important too. We decided to drop Greek entirely in the three lowest classes, with a view of getting better work done later, and to substitute for it English in three aspects. First, English Grammar and Language Analysis, in which English is to be worked as we have hitherto worked the classics; secondly, English knowledge of a common sort, *e.g.* air, physical geography, natural

<sup>1</sup> H. A. J. Munro, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

history, etc.; thirdly, a more complete preparation of the Latin lessons from an English point of view, etc., better translations, explanations of Latin by English. This is a great gain. I have waited many years for this, and now it begins to open.

*May 25th.*—It is most painful to me this want of earnestness. I sometimes fear that though the old plan of severity made sad work of it sometimes, that the danger of making boy life too pleasant, even if done lovingly, is great also.

*September 9th.*—Nothing is more fatal in a school than obtrusive religion.

*September 10th.*—Eighteen years ago on this day I stepped in here as headmaster first, and headmaster of what? O God, I thank Thee this day for all the blessing Thou hast given this work, for the mighty powers of life Thou hast breathed into this place. To-night I was in the schoolroom at the rehearsal of Samson. My heart felt deep and strong as I listened and took in the wonderful power there was in that work only. A full quarter of the school was there rendering that glorious music with disciplined, willing zeal as David led them. Θεῷ δόξα.

*October 4th.*—I was sorry to write to Mullins expressing my aversion to a Divinity prize. But, apart from that, I think a school can easily have too many prizes and scholarships, and am not at all anxious to set them going here. One must have some, just as a bait, but they don't reach the class I most care for, or only by accident,—the good needy boys,—though I admit they are the only public way of giving help. I think if the headmaster could take a few boys at lower terms it would be good. . . . I don't like many scholarships.

*October 5th.*—Well, at all events, I have founded this great school in its present state, and staked my whole life on it, "built my heart into the courses of the walls," for the cause of Christ's apostolic Church and His truth as represented best at this day by the Church of England. I believe in apostolic succession in spite of modern sneers, and sacramental grace in spite of scientific chemistry, and a new life in baptism in spite of Materialism. If the swine come into this school and this chapel of ours, so be it. God knows best whether His

Spirit shall dwell there or fly elsewhere. The world is wide. I pray when God's truth is not living in this place that the place may come to nought, and the walls be overthrown, unless God keep it as a witness of what once has been.

*October 17th.*—Been attacked again to let masters take more boys. . . . Year by year one has had to take a stand in adversity and prosperity against suggestions that are treason deep and deadly to the truth by which we live, and which would in early days have killed the life before it grew, and sooner or later would kill it now.

*November 18th.*—Bought the Chequers Inn and premises; at least have agreed to give the terms finally proposed, viz. £1200, the present owner to have it enfranchised, and pay £50 towards that. I have not 1200 pence, but it is of infinite importance getting hold of this now at a reasonable price, which it is, when the Midland Railway Station is going to make that road the thoroughfare of Uppingham, and a large inn or a fatal price would undoubtedly be the alternative.

*November 27th.*—The eventful day over. One hundred boys exactly confirmed to-day; a very impressive sight and service. The bishop come and gone—all satisfactory. Nothing untoward happened. I trust all now will go well. I don't know when I have felt a greater relief, and also a more exultant, thankful sense of present blessing than when I got back to my study after seeing and hearing that noble sight and service. Glory be to God.

*December 3rd.*—To-day we have had a Communion like King Josiah's. One hundred and eighty-four boys actually present; only about eight voluntarily absent. This was glorious and heart-cheering.

God has sent me many little springs of comfort too. . . . On Friday morning my house invited us to a concert for that night (præpostor holiday), got up by our two houses, Haslam's and mine. So we went, and I had a most happy night. It was so dreamlike, when I recollect my own school life, to sit and listen to twenty of our sixty boys singing beautiful music of the best kind, with the rest applauding, and not thinking the pleasure complete unless we came and shared it,—so dreamlike that I could have cried for joy at this proof of a new world and higher life.

*March 4th.*—My return of health has made my spirit so much more capable of active effort, and less crushed by vexations. This week we are going to have printed a detailed account of the money invested here since 1854, and the annual expenditure,—an interesting document. The expenditure, I believe, reaches £81,000 odds, against £3000 by the Trust.

*March 13th.*—A most momentous day to my feelings. Yesterday I was in fearful dread that I had got on a nest of indecency. Some of this fear was dispelled last night, but enough remained to make me very anxious. Then this morning I received a most cheering letter from Mr. Robert Gladstone (written on the receipt of our statement of expenditure), and also the £1500 he has lent me. Then came the Commissioner. After his session with the governors he spent the afternoon with me, and I showed him about. Our talk was very satisfactory to me. All is well I trust. . . . Then to-night I have investigated the indecency case, and find it very reassuring on the whole—slight, far back, and not repeated. I am more thankful than I can tell, and quite happy to be spared the anguish of punishment. Thank God for this. To-day in the paper M—— A——'s death. I feel it much. He was one of my most influential captains, much good, much evil mixed, but the good prevailed, and I trust has prevailed. But it searches my heart. He filled such an important epoch in my school life. Pray God we meet in heaven, a happy meeting of old school memories and human life.

My class gone, my work for the day done. A tight day over, but a day with much, very much to be thankful for in all ways. Thank God.

*March 19th.*—It vexes me day by day to see the bottom of the school, which I lay so much stress on in my own heart, in such incompetent hands compared with what it might be, and yet I cannot bring myself to think that men who do honest work up to a certain mark ought to be got rid of when once established here because they failed to do better. But it is one of the trials of my life, and a daily one.

*April 9th.*—Dr. N——, the headmaster at Oscott, who was at my first school with me, came. I spent a pleasant four

hours with him, and showed him all I had to show. He is a good man and thoughtful. I am glad to find an opening with the Romanists, and prize exceedingly any opportunity of showing Christian love and friendship which I am sure is the only true life. Hate is of the devil.

*May 1st.*—Commemoration Day, a lovely summer day. My sermon over; it has been on my mind very much. The day was to me solemn and sweet and sad, for I feel more and more both the burden of this great work and the want of money, and also the intense difficulty of getting any living life to work. . . . Yesterday was a bitter day. White came into me to offer to sell his property next our Quad for £700—a very reasonable sum—and I agreed, intending if I could get it in no other way to borrow and mortgage. When I told Marie this she fairly broke down, and all the suppressed trial of our long debt came out, and I broke down too. We were getting near level when my gardens and book payments pulled us back again. It is so hard, when expenses are necessarily great, to get clear the moment interest begins to suck one's blood. However, I must now make a great effort. Grasmere must be given up after this year; we cannot give it up now; and I must never more, till I have something in hand, do any avoidable thing that entails outlay.

*May 2nd.*—A terrible blow has fallen on us to-day. Last night, perhaps even as I was writing the above, my dear friend Robert Gladstone suddenly went to his rest. I feel so lonely; in a sense he was my only friend. In all the long battle here no man of power and wealth has been on my side, so that I could trust and feel support in him, till I knew Mr. Gladstone. His very existence on earth, though far away, was a feeling of support and friendship and power to which I believe I very largely owe the recovery of my health in these last years. The thought of his wisdom and friendship and strength has been such a rest to me. It has pleased God to take him, and I am as one turned out into the storm again. God help us all. I should be far more crushed if I had not felt God again and again taking earthly stays from us in our work here, and yet blessing it more and more. But the loss of his cheery, pleasant friendship is to me in itself irremediable, another of the great heavenly links pulling one up from earth. . . .

*May 5th.*—Heard this morning some account of my dear friend's peaceful end. I feel more and more what he was to me. The funeral is on Tuesday. Still my heart is quieter, and his memory beginning to be an upward feeling already. I thank God for having given him me these years. I verily believe both health of body and calmness of mind have been partly restored to me through the having felt his sympathy and power, and the rest it brought. . . .

Another glimpse to-day of God's great purposes. This afternoon R—— came in with an offer to him to go to the Deccan as tutor to the Nizam's sons and the young Mussulman nobles of the court. This is the first time in history such a thing has occurred, one of those great openings of that strange new world which this generation is seeing the birth of. I shall miss him terribly if he goes, yet if the post is what it seems, and his father willing, what can I do but tell him to go. For it may be a great world-hinge having such a Christian gentleman as he is the first in such a post. Truly this school work is wonderful. I may say with St. Paul, that God tells me "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." But I want St. Paul's gladness and faith and courage sadly, and get very downhearted and dull and spiritless. Yet this has cheered me.

*May 21st.*—Back from Wellington College last night after a very interesting visit. Luckily had a fine day, and enjoyed immensely a walk with Kempthorne and Benson in that glorious country glowing with spring brightness. I had some very satisfactory talks with Benson especially about the Conference and its prospects and work. The school, though in buildings a portentous mistake, has the wonderful advantage of some 300 or 400 acres of its own, and all the walks and freedom from annoyance that this gives. Benson himself is a good man; much good work is clearly done there.

*May 28th.*—To-day the Haileybury match. The poor Haileybury team had us in first, and we got over 370 runs, and they have six wickets down for 26 runs or so. I am sorry for it. They are a very nice set of fellows, and it will so spoil their outing. Moreover, I don't want the cricket to get too powerful in the school here, and to be worshipped and made the end of life for a considerable section of the school.

*May 29th.*—This afternoon (I cannot help connecting the fact with the cricket) H—— came to ask leave to hold a meeting of the præpostors at 7 P.M., and about eight came to my study to ask counsel, as six of the eleven, the leading six, met in one of their studies (a præpostor's) about a week ago, and sent out for wine and made claret cup. This is one of the most utter acts of treason and mock manly meanness I have ever had to deal with, considering the circumstances. The deliberate, quiet, lying betrayal of trust by leaders in the school. I greatly fear it belongs to the professional and cricket as a science, and the setting up a rival power in the school by having so much made of a thing not taught by a master. It is very grievous in any case, and I really don't know what to do. I should dismiss W—— at once, if the thing had come before me as found out by me and not through the præpostors. It is good finding the præpostors acting against the school heroes in this way.

*May 31st.*—I was rejoiced at H——'s saying they had the opinions of all worth having in the school on their side in bringing this before me. This is indeed something to thank God for.

*June 1st.*—It really is glorious the good faith, on the whole, that is now rooted in the school. C—— and H——, the two principal characters of this late treason, have been to me to-night, and I have been thoroughly convinced of the general feeling and their own. When one considers that this sort of party is *the thing* in most schools, to have the præpostors denounce it, and the chief actors thoroughly acknowledge that it was good it should be so, come to me to express their sorrow and make friends if possible, and uphold this in the school, is a most happy victory of truth and right, and I feel very thankful.

*August 9th.*—Home yesterday after a delightful holiday. What has not happened! First of all God has broken the chains off me, and I am at last free from debt. Dear Cousin Maria Waldron has left me between £3000 and £4000, which lifts me well out of the prison. Glory be to God for His goodness. I know not how to be thankful enough. I can scarcely believe it yet. Our break-up day was fine, and all went off well, and on Saturday we got to Grasmere. The

time has passed like magic, like a dream. We took the Gladstone children about a good deal, and spent a happy time altogether, though his departure was often in our hearts, sad for us ; but why mourn for him ? I am unusually well in health, and I trust shall be able to do my work this half-year. We had many guests during the holidays, old boys and others.

*August 11th.*—The first Sunday over with its sermon. Always a great relief, for I feel very doubtful and diffident about the fitness of many of my sermons. . . . I feel it a grand thing to have such a true work to do as this. Even the holidays, when over, and I am once more at the work, do not seem too attractive. Yet I wish I was not so hunted, so pressed for time always. I think from what I hear that our system and constructive excellence are beginning to make some impression abroad. At all events encouraging stories reach us, which make my work here easier by making the assistant masters feel proud of their places. But what matters ? I feel sure of the living truth of the effort. . . .

*August 15th.*—Great efforts being made to get me to pardon the six of the eleven who played the traitor last half, and admit them to the old boys' supper, but I will not. A great principle is at stake, and the better the culprits the more their punishment will prove that no individual merit shall in such a case of treason avail. I will shoot my mutineers all the more mercilessly because the temptation was so slight, and their general character on the whole so good. W—— has been at me. He cannot see that this is no single arbitrary act, but a link in a chain of nineteen years' forging, every link of which has been forged on the same principle of kindly trust, and when the hour came, firm and unflinching judgment. He said I ought to take advice, that a jury of men eminent for goodness would pardon them, etc. I said I was acting on principle ; that I had had during all my early life here to act in defiance of the advice of men considered wise. That Uppingham was Uppingham because I had dared take my stand on new principles, and work them steadily out in opposition to the opinions of others. He said "that means that you are infallible." "Not so," I answered, "but that I understand a ruler's responsibility and accept it."

*August 22nd.*—I do not know that I ever in my life heard anything more inspiring and touching than C. E. Green's statements in talking with me before this, “that the stupidest boy who went out of Uppingham knew and felt he had a mission in life,” and much more to the same purpose. It is a glorious work of the Spirit of the living God when this living feeling of true life catches fast hold of men like him,—a feeling, a life, not a knowledge, power, or a school of thought, but a spirit of holy effort. Thank God for it.

*August 26th.*—I have paid £10 to-day to P—— at Stoke Dry, on an arbitration for damage done by flood—reserving, however, all legal rights for the future. This is the first real claim made in nineteen years. Not one has ever been able to frame a complaint against the boys into the definite shape of a demand for damages. P—— behaved very civilly in the matter.

*September 4th.*—I am almost amused at the way in which masters talk . . . quite forgetting, as they speak, that there was no school at all in its present sense till I pulled it out of the depths of the sea. I quite feel as a pearl diver might do who sees in after years the town jewellers with his big pearl in their shop, which he brought out of dark depths of the dangerous sea from the midst of the sharks and the waters at the risk of life, whilst they have sat in the shop and put a little setting and fixing work round it.

*October 18th.*—Sundry boys complained of for cutting their names in my house ; took them to the workshop, and set them each down with his penknife at a bit of oak to cut his name four times, amidst much grinning. It is a grand thing punishing without galling. . . .

*October 20th.*—A quiet day ; my daughters' first communion to-day ; thank God. I am so grateful for it. To see the children quietly walking the path that leads to Christ is a great blessing. How small other causes would seem if one felt sure that the children were full of truth and love of Christ.

*October 21st.*—Ἄνθρωπον τι ἔταθον to-day in seeing two columns of the *Times* devoted to the consecration of Rugby chapel, whilst ours remains unconsecrated, owing to the men with whom we have to do. Yet what does it really matter ? “The work goes on and slacketh not.” The subtle life power

is beyond their power, and very likely all the more chastened and blessed because of their power.

*November 4th.*—Benson<sup>1</sup> come and gone after a most pleasant visit to me and mine. He preached a noble sermon on the three prophets—Moses, Jonah, and Elijah, who thought their mission had failed, and told God so, and God's answers to them. He had a beautiful day, fortunately, and everything looked well. It was a comfort and pleasure to me his being here. I am sure our intercourse with one another is a great good.

*November 5th.*—A pleasant announcement from Theodore to-day, that very likely all the money I was to get as residuary legatee of my cousin will vanish into thin air by the failure of a dishonest banker who managed her affairs. It is lucky my heart had not dwelt on this. I get my legacy of £1000, but as my brother practically applied to me to pay the £1600 which was advanced me by the trustees in my hour of darkness in old days, I shall be harder up for ready money than ever. However, I may yet get it, but if not, it is all right. God is showing me how easily He could relieve my money cares, even according to my weak ideas, if it was good for me, so I will even suppose it is not good for me, and thus look on it as a sign of His presence rather than as a loss. I was most gratified by Marie, who opened the letter, thinking it brought news of my father, not even thinking it worth while to tell me in Fairfield when she came up, and simply asking me when I came home if I knew it before. Not a word has been said since about it, nor has it ruffled our happy home and its quiet peace in the least. It is almost worth losing it to see how little it adds to or takes away from our real life. Yet to be free from immediate money cares and have something in hand would be no slight boon. But we know Him in whom we have trusted, and we will not fear or fret; at least we will try not to.

*November 21st.*—In the evening Boyd, Miss Boyd, and Alington came; on Wednesday was much occupied with them. An excellent account of North Woolwich in the evening. These peeps into God's great living world are wonderfully refreshing.

<sup>1</sup> Headmaster of Wellington College; Archbishop of Canterbury, 1883-1896.

*November 23rd.*—I am getting more and more convinced that I cannot govern these men ; that I have failed. I know not whether it is my own fault or theirs. But I doubt I have failed. Of course I feel no difficulty whatever in keeping up the school, or in the external success, or, if I would sacrifice my convictions of what is necessary and true for the future, of pleasing and ruling them. What I do feel and see is that the whole body of older masters has set itself resolutely against my government, and that they are determined to contest singly and collectively everything which does not please them, as on equal terms with me, and allow me no authority or influence as headmaster. My only hold on them is that they fear my going would damage their properties and risk the prosperity of the school. I don't quite see my way out of this, or how far it is good for me to struggle on. However, much that is dark clears with time. Morning comes if one will but wait, instead of rushing about in the dark and the night. It is clearly right for me to work through the settling of the new scheme, however irksome it may be. But I fear I have failed as far as Uppingham itself goes, though the wonderful and living success amongst the boys more and more comes home to me and sinks into my heart. That again complicates the problem. Have I any right, when God has put me here, and blessed the real work of the place so wonderfully and truly, to think of failure or deserting my post because of the comparative evil, though a trying one to me, of officers being mutinous and offensive. I doubt that. It is good, however, to look before and after, to sit loose in the saddle, and not be frightened at the thought of being kicked off, and of seeming failure. Outward success is not always granted. Moses was worse off than me by a long way. What a life he had of it ! It may be I may have my Joshua also, and though I die without seeing my former hopes fulfilled, though I fail, a better man than I may go on and do the conquering work. I can bless and praise God for what He has let me do ; and calmly and gladly fail if He will.

*February 27th, 1873.*—Heard of Walter Cornish's death to-day. Alas ! that his life was so sacrificed, and he allowed to over-work till too late. Yet I mourn not. May he welcome me home when I go, good, self-denying heart that

he was, and is. How thankful I feel for my champions ; God has blessed us here.

*March 9th.*—How many good things have come to me on Sundays to thank God for ! Holy Communion to-day, and in the morning a cheque for £941, dear Cousin Maria's legacy, came. There was a collection for N. Woolwich, and nearly twenty years ago, when I first came, in the first spring forward of the successful beginning, I promised the New Zealand Fund £100, and I paid £25, and never again till now have I had a free penny. This morning I had the pleasure of drawing a cheque for £90, which I will send to the Bishop of Lichfield to-morrow to pay my old debt to God. . . .

*March 16th.*—Had a letter from Henry this morning, to announce his K.C.B. He is pleased. So am I too, for he well deserves much more than he is ever likely to get.

*March 24th.*—From a letter of Theodore's this morning discovered that I was £450 more in debt than I recollect. Rather damaged my breakfast, but now I am inclined to thank God for having let me forget it so many years. To thank Him still more for His wonderful delivery of me by Cousin Maria's legacy at this crisis. Really I should have been overwhelmed had it not come, just as dear old aunt's legacy came to save me from the consequences of ——'s fatal wrongdoings. How trying, too, never to be above one's work in money or strength during all these years ! Yet if God be with us, what matters ?

*May 4th.*—Yesterday I told Christian how intensely I disliked the taking of extra boys into masters' houses, and viewed it as the beginning of the overthrow of my life-work, and had only given way ; perhaps mistakenly because of my earnest desire to remove as far as possible the complaints of masters, and get them to work in better spirit. I also told him that I had not undertaken to sell W. Earle's house for him, and that if he in his precipitancy had thrust his head into a noose, it did not follow that I cut him down. He had no claim, as he had clearly understood my terms beforehand, that I never even in my darkest hours had sold one hair's-breadth of my power to deal with the school business in the manner most for the good of education, and I was not likely to do so now.

*May 13th.*—The concert to-night ; David's Cantata, The Widow of Nain, The Fair Song, The Wood, The Uppingham

School Song, the first and last for the first time, and one of Wintle's. The whole concert Uppingham. What an epoch! The boys encored the school song again and again, and all rose and stood whilst it was being sung. It was a grand time for those who can see life power and believe in seeds. Never before in England has such a thing happened as a great school having its own music in this way and rising with it. The zeal of the boys was wonderful. This stirs the heart and refreshes it. It is a burst of spring in the midst of the east winds of masters and the pelting rain of Commissions.

*May 31st.*—One of those little bits of light from above which God sends to comfort and uphold His workers from time to time. To-day the præpostors held a court on a case of bullying. This evening the culprit appealed to me on being offered an appeal. I went into the head room, and found that ten boys of the Remove had denounced one of their class to the præpostors for bullying and teasing. This is a splendid triumph of internal government. The culprit pleaded guilty, but not to the extent that he was accused, and then we dismissed our witnesses and proceeded to consider his punishment, which, I laid down, was not to be what he deserved, but what would work best. He had previously had the choice given him whether he would be punished through the præpostors or by me, and he chose the præpostors. We sentenced him to six cuts with a cane on Monday. But the grand thing is this feeling of law and kindly self-government, and this guarding of their own liberties, and getting rid of the thieves' honour idea. I shall restore one of the holidays taken away, and the leave out of call over again. It is glorious. . . .

*June 2nd.*—Sent a note to John Skrine offering him a mastership. Received his acceptance this morning to my great comfort. These two lines very little represent the longing, and prayers, and trust that I might have God's blessing on him and me in this, or the relief and strength of heart I feel at his coming.<sup>1</sup> . . .

<sup>1</sup> "It was a few weeks after this incident, that he asked me to take service with him. . . . He gave the appointment in words which would reveal much of his character, if seals could be broken—words whose pure and high accents made of a professional engagement a sacred soldier's oath. The man thought nobly of his office who welcomed a follower to a 'a soldier's

*June 20th.*—Sometimes the weight of living in this atmosphere of responsibility, danger, work, and weariness seems almost more than I can bear. It has done so to-day. I feel like a bird in a cage beating against the bars, longing to be free, but baffled everywhere. One thing, however, I see clearly, it is God's will that I stand here and do my duty as He bids at present; and another, that the parents care for my staying. These are great facts, and I will try and be faithful and dogged, but I dread the very sight of a master.

*June 22nd.*—Thank God for the last Sunday and the last sermon over; I feel greatly relieved. For my part, whatever may be thought of these things in days to come, I hold that truth always in the long run is good, and though men may blame me for my feelings and actions, yet a knowledge of the pain, and weariness, and doubts, and misgivings, and loneliness will help weary workers better than shining lies of eternal success. It may yet be, too, that I may fail and be overthrown in the end, as far as this place is concerned, and then it will be well that the truth should be known, or at all events my conviction, that if I gave up my cause, and would partially sacrifice the boys, and have a big, overgrown school with its false glory and increase of wealth, that I should be applauded to the echo by those who now strive against me. I have made up my mind, however, to fight it out to the last inch and not to desert my post.

*August 31st.*—R—— is, I hope, going on well. He gives a sad account of Oxford irreligion. It does give me faith to hear how the better old boys prize my morning lessons in divinity. He is most strong upon them. When I recollect with how much misgiving I introduced them, knowing how little they pay directly in examinations, and how I feared the boys might not take to them, I am most comforted to find how living they are. I feel myself how much I gain by doing it. I never comment many minutes without getting some new light myself, some clearer way of bringing out the old. They are an immense gain to me as well as to them.

place, and in no mean regiment, with work for the brave and true, and the blessing of the weary at close of day.'”—Skrine's *Memory of Edward Thring*.

*September 14th.*—How hard it is to feel the truth in love, as well as to speak it! Much work and much suffering tend to make one undervalue the less of others though it may be their best. This is not right. Yet I fear that in trying to identify masters with my work and make them fellow-workers they have pulled me, in their minds, down to them, rather than I them up to me. I seem to have failed nearly entirely in this. On the other hand, as I said above, I feel I am in danger of underrating their work, because I could have got as good in the open market any time, forgetting that I might have lighted on much worse, forgetting how much of it has been their best. This is not right. To speak kindly truth in this hard world is a difficult thing.

*October 20th.*—Received the examiners' reports this morning. They are a caution of what may be expected if we get an examining yoke on our neck. They lay down the law in fine style, about the work, and what it should be. The Uppingham divinity work is all wrong,—no knowledge of New Testament, Greek, etc., quite King Cambyses vein. How much this would have tried me in the days of my weakness, and crushed out the life, or at all events made it anxious and dangerous! Now I can afford to laugh, a little bitterly perhaps, but still to laugh. “Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsæ.” This kind of thing supplies the  $\pi\circ\upsilon\sigma\tau\bar{\omega}$  for all the ignorant ill-nature that may be floating about.

*November 12th.*—How strangely different the world I live in now from the world I started to live in! how painfully different! Then it was full of education and teaching, and the boys, and what was good for them. My school work was all in all. Now I am full of masters' quarrels, and what to say or do to escape from, or baffle them, and my time and brain is absorbed in tomfoolery; and I don't see how to escape from it.

*December 6th.*—. . . This morning I had a marvellous sign of the times, and of God's hand and life working, in a letter from a clergyman in New Brunswick, asking help on the ground of the reputation Uppingham had for missionary zeal. How wonderful!

*December 13th.*—Also finished and sent my song, “The Schoolboy in Wardley Wood,” to Sir Sterndale Bennett. Both

David and I were much pleased with the words. And I am so glad that our great English composer will give us a special bit of music for ourselves, and mark his connection with us. It is good for the school to be joined to great men.

*February 15th, 1874.*—Read Patteson's<sup>1</sup> life in the evening. I knew him well at Eton. How touching it is now to find so many whom one knew already become history. I don't know how it is; perhaps the youthful spring gone out of one, but I feel more and more daily unequal to carrying on this great work, and cowardly and shrinking from it. Yet God can bring strength out of weakness. If one can but live truly then it does not matter. The feeling able to do the work is not needed if one does it. Yet the feeling of shrinking and cowardice, and the desire to have finished and be released, is strange and uncomfortable. I do not, however, want to master the problem of life now, content to go on and do as I am bid by my Lord.

*February 16th.*—. . . I have been glad of one thing. Powell tells me he shall get £30 or £40 for the New Brunswick clergyman who appeals to us for help.

*February 25th.*—New pronunciation of Latin going on kindly. If it succeeds I shall move the Conference to apply to the foreign universities and see whether a European pronunciation cannot be agreed on.

*March 23rd.*—Since Friday we have had —, a Canadian schoolmaster, here, and his hearty enthusiasm and hope to do something good out there in the school way has cheered me very much. The New World is opening for the work which I have lately looked to. I feel in talking with him the difference between talking to the blind and to one who sees. I always feel here when I venture to speak at all that it is to the blind, and to have the fresh, New World eye in here for once is exceedingly refreshing. We have talked over everything almost pertaining to schools, and I feel, as I said, refreshed and cheered.

*March 25th.*—A lawyer's letter this morning from — about his unhappy boy. I have answered it, saying no lawyer shall ever enter this school or question one of the boys committed by their parents to my care, but that if he has any legal

<sup>1</sup> First Bishop of Melanesia.

remedy in any court I will meet him anywhere he can cite me. Privately I have told Mr. —— what my evidence is, and how completely I can crush the poor boy. But it is worth noting if a man dares attack me in this way at the height of my power, how shameful the view taken of schools, and how immoral the pressure brought to bear on the weak, as indeed I too well know from the experience of my early days here. I feel more and more the bright, cheering effect of that Canadian. It is like a fresh breeze let into a sickroom to have had him here. I think his talks with —— and others will have done both them and me good, as giving an outside, enthusiastic, thoughtful view. I have always looked of late years to the work and the cause rooting itself in new lands. England is too far gone in wrong systems to be reformed much from within, and I feel as if my life was set free, like a bird from a cage, and had flown out of doors into free lands. Thank God for it, just at this time too when I am so weary and down in other ways.

*March 31st.*—Have been taking leave of my Easter boys. A very sad and solemn thing with so large a proportion leaving in disgrace. Poor little ——. I could not refrain from tears ; he came round the table, child as he is, to my side crying, to wish good-bye. It was very piteous ; may Christ deliver him and all of us. O God, it is heavy and sore work sometimes. . . . It is a solemn thing, this last night of such a quarter as this has been. May God cleanse and deliver me and this school, and wash away what has been wrongly done by me for Christ's sake. Amen.

*April 12th.*—Had an invitation from the editor of the *Argonaut* to write my views of school occupations, etc. Shall decline from want of time ; also I don't believe the writing and pushing is the proper way. God's ways are living work and quiet, patient doing ; in His own good time He will bring fruit. . . .

*April 13th.*—This morning at the Aristotle lesson laid down some plain principles of Christian *versus* heathen philosophy. These things will bear fruit by and by. The national mind is not open enough yet to take them, but there is plenty of time. "The mills of God grind slowly," and assuredly the day will come when all shape will be recognised by right

thinkers to be thought made visible, and to move in the midst of the great language of creation with a mind shut to the voice of the Creator, and determined to set aside the speaker in considering His speech, will be held an absurdity.

*April 22nd.*—Ridding come and gone. Gave us an excellent sermon on Sunday, so wonderfully appropriate to recent occurrences, that, till I asked him, I quite thought he must have heard of them, taking as his text, "If the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted." Two beautiful days for his visit. I believe it a very important fact his coming, as I look on it as the first time that a lover of truth of the aristocratic school type or popular school type has come here.

*May 2nd.*—Mrs. Pilkington came up and spoke very feelingly about the school, and said that at the Universities our character for sending up good men and moral men stood alone. This is a happy crown to win. May God keep it true and cleanse our sins.

*May 9th.*—This morning a letter from a lady just come from Melbourne, speaking in the most casual way of the recommendations of the school to her by sundry people in Melbourne, unknown to me "and by many others there." A strange bit of modern life, to think of our work here being common talk in Australia.

*June 4th.*—Went up to Bagshawe's to-day, and comforted my captain, Powell, who has broken down from overwork. It is curious how one's trials turn into blessings. I was able not only to feel with him and give him sound advice through my own sufferings and weakness, but still more to make him feel, I think, quite differently, when he found how much I had had of the same kind. He said, "I always thought you had an iron constitution." I answered, "Indeed no, for seventeen years here I never had a day of perfect health, and I owe, under God, my sitting here alive by you to-day to the care in diet and exercise I have taken ever since I went to Cambridge." I had a good deal of quiet talk with him, and asked him to Grasmere, and I think left him much comforted as well as wiser about self-training. I feel very thankful for being able to do it, and for all the painful experience that has opened my heart, and made me able to give comfort.

*June 12th.*—After dinner yesterday I walked round the

houses and gardens with a Mr. Greenfield, and saw a most marvellous proof of our school tone, which he observed first,—a number of ripe strawberries bordering the boys' path to Rawnsley's house, untouched and safe. The more remarkable, because it is not only the path for his own boys, but for his class and the school generally. When I recollect my own school life it is astonishing.

*June 16th.*—My bank book and money still on my heart, much overdrawn. I really don't know what to do. It would be easy, methinks, to live differently in a private station. Perhaps I deceive myself, but I know my present place would have made me rich had I worked for money, so I will even still, as I grow old, trust in God not to let my wife and children come to trouble because of me, even if I might have been better. God is not stingy, nor does He give us our deserts only. I wish my life had started with a different idea of the Christian soldier's warfare, but God knows best. The only thing clear to me is how little we know of what is good; we move in the shadows of self even when most unselfish.

*June 21st.*—The last sermon over. A great event always. The first real feeling of possible holiday. And with it has come that strange emptiness of heart and fearfulness, which, or something like it, I suppose men feel in the pause of a battle. I cannot express it, that dull sense of much to be done and nothing to do it with, which I know only too well. This mockery almost, as it seems to me, of living in the midst of apparent success, and being thought successful, when the whole ground seems heaving under our feet, and one has learnt so utterly to expect defection, that one can scarcely trust or at least feel restful in one's dearest friends, and most decidedly know that the best hopes of one's heart are quite out of any horizon I shall ever see on earth. But life is a seed. I will have faith in the seed power.

*June 22nd.*—When I recollect myself at twenty and my ideals, how thankful I am that the fierce impatience of those days has got into orderly control. . . .

*August 17th.*—I hardly know what to think or do. My bank book is simply ruinous, and yet in this great concern, with its many interests and complete arrangements, the intellectual work, the boy and parent management work, the

master management work, and the money work, I hardly know how or what to do. One thing I must do—cut down our expenses, but as headmaster with this large establishment and family growing up, it is easier said than done. I am at my wits' ends, and not far from my heart's end, so downhearted do I feel. God help me.

*August 28th.*—A long letter from Theodore, giving the winding up of dear Cousin Maria's executorship. How wonderfully that money came in, just as I was sinking again! I must, however, now retrench, though it is very difficult to do so in my public position and varied kinds of work, all pressing upon me and demanding all my power.

*September 25th.*—A—— R—— here to-day, said he had never had so happy a life as his time here. I am so cheered at finding how much success one has had in giving happiness and therefore better life to the young. Life which they think happy in after years, when near enough to it and young enough to have no sentimental halo round it.

*September 29th.*—A very cheering letter from Fred. Rowe in India, speaking of the effect of my exhortations to truth on him. I am thankful to find the life gone out into the world, for I much fear that here it will be destroyed to a great extent before many years pass, and numbers, and gain, and sham, for a time, at all events, house here, but they cannot destroy the life in the living, though they may defile these buildings and this place.

*October 2nd.*—Walked out with Skrine in the afternoon, had a long talk about the propriety of preaching new life as the gift of Christ in sacraments, and the need of living new life—rather than the Church as the channel of life. Preaching up to the Church, not down from it. Up to it through right life rightly received and used, not down from it into right life; right life working by right shapes, not right shapes making right life.

*October 12th.*—This afternoon was our confirmation, a wonderfully solemn and cheering service. The bishop<sup>1</sup> gave us the very best address, except the first I think, he has ever given. It was most perfect, so simple, and so full of true power. May God keep him and guide him, for surely he is a

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Magee of Peterborough.

great mind. To see and hear the boys and that touching service goes to the heart.

*November 3rd.*—I said (to the masters) that nothing would induce me to admit an extra boy in each house. This last I think most of, because I feel sure my work here will be overthrown on this very point of numbers, and I am glad, therefore, of every opportunity of bearing witness to my conviction that it is destruction of all my work. I am glad, too, that they should see how much I gave up in past years in trying to conciliate them. Altogether it was a morning that got out more important truths for past, present, and future than I could have thought possible without raising any ill-will, but rather the contrary.

*December 14th.*—A solemn epoch. My dear old father passed away on Friday last, December 11th. A letter was lost, so I did not hear till this morning. I was enabled by this to get through the work and practically wind up the half-year. . . . My dear old father, how thankful I am to have had a brave good man as my father according to his lights! I thank God for him. And my dear, dear mother—O may God keep her and comfort her; sixty-three years married, and for the last fourteen or fifteen all her daily work and thoughts centred on him, and he is gone. But a more saintly woman in practice and faith I believe cannot be found. God does and will support her with His holy comfort.

*December 22nd.*—This time of rest and thought is a great boon to me. I feel more and more disinclined to have anything to do with public life and all its noisy clatter, where every one is playing his own tune, and barrel-organs which can go with a handle are worth much more than violins which want a soul. In religion most of all, every one at present seems to be hunting for some specialty to make it difficult to be a Christian, or else to be throwing down all barriers into a lawless wolfdom of power worship. Thank God there is still quiet work,—work, at least, if not quiet; and thought, and calm recesses of unambitious peace, and faith, and divine calm ordering and commands from the great King.

*January 29th, 1875.*—The visible results have indeed been crippled fearfully by the want of elastic co-operation, and little, very little been done in teaching, compared with

what might have been done with less self-willed subordinates, but the spirit of life has been in it, and has gone forth and will sow itself and bear fruit in happier places. So now I turn to my work once more, with many great comforts, many blessings, and the sting greatly taken out of the ills, though at the price of all repression of feeling for this place.

*February 27th.*—Yet I have been cheery. I commended my cause to God last night, and tried to put away vexation, and pledge myself not to desert my post till he gave the word, and I feel He has answered me with "Not yet," or at least, "Not for these pettinesses, which are petty," for I feel not to care for them to-day from an inward power. One great pleasure has come to me, I am reading German with sufficient ease now to insure my going on, as it is no labour, and I have some interesting books; this pleases me very much. My Whitehall sermon is also practically finished, and I am satisfied with its main purport, come weal, come woe, or come nothing from it.

*March 1st.*—I find it hard, now my dream of united work has broken up, and the human interest which it gave has vanished, to bear the friction of the petty life here and the paltry ignorances and hindrances of the confounders. But I know it is wrong. I know I ought to be faithful and quiet. But to have to work at work one cares for intensely, work with human beings as its object, and do it with men some of whom one mistrusts in the spirit of their work, is a severe strain, for it never ceases. But I know this self-feeling is mean. I ought to love God's will and rejoice in His blessing here.

*March 4th.*—A letter from Mr. —— to-day; this will do me good, as I was as usual touched with the life of it, and the sense of doing a living work here came into my heart freshly from his words. I thank God for it. My German reading goes on well. I am glad of this in a mild way. It has been a great giving up the not becoming a German scholar, but the work would not allow it, and I don't regret it, though glad to make away a little with it.

*March 11th.*—In the afternoon, after going to the races, I went to the rehearsal and was introduced to Joachim and the rest. In the evening we had a most wonderful concert.

. . . Joachim said he was delighted with the Cantata, and passed very high praise on the boys. I was greatly struck with Joachim; he seemed to me a man of great power of thought and character, full of life observation. He observed on the maps we had up, which interested him much, and he was down on the Pictorial Grammar at once. When I told him I felt sure no nation would ever be really educated till its poor had their heads cleared by such a method in their own language, he said, "Have they got it in Germany? was it in the Vienna Exhibition?" I said, "Oh, no, our own International Exhibition rejected it." He said, "Oh, too simple for them; Columbus's egg, yes. Are there any photographs of them? can I get them, etc.?" I told him No, but I sent at once for the *Gradual*, and gave him a copy. He is the *only man* who has ever been alive to the possible future of this invention. . . .

Well, I said I would not grumble again. I prayed God to let me know His will and He has. First He has cleared away the fumes of self-love out of me, and I see clearly as I used to,

That though it blow or cold or hot,  
The work goes on and slacketh not.

These troubles vex and torture me, but have not really stopped the work, nor will do so; and what has brought me to see it first, was this strange recognition of Joachim's of the teaching work here; then dear old Mrs. Symes stayed behind to wish me good-bye, and said, almost with tears if not quite, "that the great happiness of her latter days had been the knowing me and the work here." This perception of the life power breathing in it came into my heart like a fresh, clear breeze and freshened my whole soul. Then this morning we had a letter from the Countess K—— at Weimar, saying the same kind of life truths about us, and how our life cheered them. So I blessed God for cheering us with their view and feeling of our life, and we will try to cheer them.

She also said she was greatly interested in *Life Science*, and was going to send it to one of the greatest German educators who had the management of the Crown Prince's children, and to others; so these wonderful testimonies to the *Life* and to the secret growth of it all came in this twelve

hours of last night and this morning, and my whole world is widened and lighted up with new life and blessing, and I pray God to let me do His work manfully, and give me strength, as He has given me some sight of His blessing. To-morrow I go to town to preach ; it is very distasteful to my feelings, but clearly my duty, and shall I not gladly do what God bids me ? May He bless my message and make me a *προφήτης*.

*March 16th.*—My prayer for guidance has been wonderfully answered, and I feel quite clear of the petty annoyances and able to laugh at them. It is not pleasant, but I see how utterly purposeless it all is, and how little if at all it touches the real life of the school. . . .

Just been up to Bagshawe's house to speak to the house, and to punish three boys for disgraceful conduct to L—— on his leaving. Poor L——, I fear they have made his life a very sore one here. But I trust I have exposed their meanness, and said words they will not lightly forget. These things are great trials, but great blessings also ; they enable one to renew and freshen up the great truths by which the school lives, and whilst their hearts are softened by shame and fear, to press them home in a vivid way. May God in His mercy bless us all.

*April 3rd.*—Back from Liverpool ; immensely cheered and strengthened by my visit. What a marvel it is that God has given me two such friends and powers as Mr. Jacob and Mr. Birley. They have thoroughly taken my point of view that Uppingham now should furnish a true standard of good payment for true work, and they will strive heartily for our terms. They will also see how money may be raised to meet immediate wants. Indeed, if masters don't prevent it, everything is in good train. We shall have great difficulty, no doubt, but we shall do it. I had some good talks with them, and was exceedingly glad to find that Mr. Birley thoroughly grasped and felt deeply the all importance of keeping the numbers down. This holds out more hope for the future than I have yet had. Altogether I have been greatly comforted.

*April 18th.*—The choir practised in chapel to-night for the first time, a glorious reality. How the grand music rolled through the space and lingered in the roof ! Perchance a thousand years hence that roof or those walls may fill with

prayer and praise, and the music we first heard to-day be rolling on. Amen.

*April 23rd.*—There is a most distressing revelation come to us of bullying in C——'s house, right against the spirit of all our work . . . I am troubled and perplexed beyond measure by it. Then I have been exceedingly distressed this evening by Marie telling me that my two last sermons were open to the charge of being preached *against the masters*. It searches my heart in the most painful way. I did not mean it. God bring good out of it; He judges, not men, and this weary life will come to an end in His good time.

*April 26th.*—A practice in chapel with the whole choir to-night; it was glorious. The number of the school 329. 14 day boys, 315 boarders. Lower school full also.

*April 27th.*—Some of my governors to-day did not know that I had years ago *stopped the numbers of the school* from increasing!

*May 7th.*—I took a walk yesterday with Skrine, and was delighted to find that he has become alive himself, keenly alive to the teaching question, and the evil of the old system. I really now have one disciple who not only unconsciously knows some of the views by which common-sense and principles lead up to the rules, and the rules are only common-sense and principles stated as results, but also consciously sees the impassable gulf there is between the new and old, and the deadness of the old. This comforted me. But it has been a desperately tight half-year.

[A master had said that a boy in his class must go, as he could not stand him.]

H—— came to me about it, and I told him I did not understand being beaten by a boy; that I could not and would not act against any boy except for such overt acts as could justly be produced in court; that the boy should not go, or the example be set in the school of a boy being beyond master's management.

*May 28th.*—. . . To-night I went up and thanked R——'s house for their zeal in clearing themselves and the school from cribs and dishonest work, and it is an infinite pleasure to me. It is a great onward step. The being able to praise is the battle won, and never before have all ranks in a house worked so well together for truth.

*June 1st.*—Took a walk with —. Talked education, and of the lectures on composition and the artistic eye that I had been giving my boys. How education, if true, is not bookworm work, but the giving the subtle power of observation, the faculty of seeing, the eye and mind to catch hidden truths, and new creative germs. If the cursed rule-mongering and technical terms could be banished to limbo, something might be done. Three parts of teaching and learning in England is the hiding common-sense and disguising ignorance under phrases.

*June 15th.*—I had to dismiss that poor wretch — to-night for drinking. After all his warnings it is almost incredible. Four others implicated: it is very sad. Two of the *præpostors* brought it before us. It was very encouraging to see the perfectly simple matter-of-course way in which it was done. This made the sneaking of the others seem a light thing. Still it is hard to bear and pitiful to have to do. Poor silly wretches, I do pity them; to see them selling their lives for such meanness.

*August 27th.*—Our great day over. The old boys come and gone, and the trustees' meeting,<sup>1</sup> the most important since the school was a school, also over, and all well. . . . It is wonderful, a new world has rolled in. The intrenched camp in which I have had to live is no more, and a friendly country instead has opened. I could scarcely realise myself, indeed, I only half feel or a quarter what I know I shall feel of this vital difference of friends to deal with instead of opponents, and no more responsibility as single and solitary upholder of a policy about which I had no friend to consult, and in carrying out which many a hinderer from within. This solitary responsibility is over, and law and recognised position, and friends to manage, have succeeded to it. Thank God for His mercies. How He has brought it to pass in time! It is marvellous: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then were we like unto them that dream." I am like one who dreams. I cannot yet feel that the twenty years of fog and cloud and cold have rolled away. Θεῷ δέξα ἐν νίκαιῃ.

*August 28th.*—The masters, I think, are greatly astonished at the things having been done which I wanted done. Part of their opposition I believe to have been a frightened effort

<sup>1</sup> The first under the new scheme.

to do themselves what they believed I couldn't do ; just as a timid person seizes the reins of the driver when the horse starts and does his best to upset the vehicle. However, now that is over, and some at all events are repentant, all I take it wish to be quiet. . . . I do not think I ever went at such a rush and high pressure as during the last fortnight. Not that there was much anxiety ; I have had that worse ten thousandfold, but the rush and the strain and the pace were tremendous. It is well over. And I do thank God with all my heart for my changed world.

The old boys' gathering is wonderfully pleasant. Nothing strikes me more than the happy freedom of it. They are all like great merry babies, so utterly unrestrained, and so utterly buoyant and simple in their merriment, without the least fear that anything will ever go wrong. It is the freshest, cheeriest air and sunshine possible with them.

*September 10th.*—Twenty-two years ago I came into this house as headmaster, and now Θεῷ δόξα. I do thank God for these twenty-two years of blessing, work indeed and pain, danger, almost death, but blessing unspeakable, and life and promise of life. How strange, too, that such a complete cycle should be comprised in my time ; the rise and establishment of the school, and then this great settlement of it by the scheme on its new basis. . . . I am thankful on the anniversary to feel less haunted, more peaceful than I have been for weeks on weeks. I feel it is good to serve, good to work, good to suffer, and that God does indeed bless. I want no other reward than strength and will to serve Him, and heart to see and feel Him. May His holy power rest in this work of school. May He bless all my darlings in this house. May He bless all His warriors in and from this school. Amen.

*Sunday, 24th.*—A blessed day of rest to me. On Sundays I can gather my thoughts and think of blessings ; on week days I must fix my thoughts and get through as I can. . . . I begin work to-morrow with no outside infliction going on for the first time these many weeks. How strongly it comes home to me, that it is not what we do or say that God uses, but our lives, and how immeasurably my life has been raised by the trials and waste of time that to a great extent have destroyed the intellectual power of the work done.

## CHAPTER IX

### METHODS AND IDEALS

THE interval between 1853, when Thring was appointed headmaster, and 1875, had seen Uppingham rise into a great public school as that term is understood in England. It was admitted by his contemporaries that no other English schoolmaster had, under similar circumstances, or, indeed, under any circumstances, achieved an equal feat of school construction. The diary has made us familiar with the difficulties of the work and its inspirations as well. It seems fitting to pause at this point of the history in order to consider more closely the aims and methods which secured this unique success.

The merit which Thring would have most distinctly claimed for his work at Uppingham was its painstaking adaptation of structure to training purposes. To this he attached supreme importance. The "almighty wall" was, as has been said, the phrase into which, after his manner, he condensed his view of the vital nature of this question of school structure.

Whatever men may say or think, the almighty wall is, after all, the supreme and final arbiter of schools.

I mean, no living power in the world can overcome the

dead, unfeeling, everlasting pressure of the permanent structure, of the permanent conditions under which work has to be done. Every now and then a man can be found to say honestly—

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage,

but men are not trained to freedom inside a prison. The prison will have its due. Slowly but surely the immovable, unless demolished, determines the shape of all inside it.

. . . Never rest till you have got the almighty wall on your side, and not against you. Never rest till you have got all the fixed machinery for work, the best possible. The waste in a teacher's workshop is the lives of men.<sup>1</sup>

The individual study for each lad ; the individual cubicle in the dormitory ; the house, limited to thirty boys, with its separate grounds and domestic arrangements ; the chapel and large schoolroom for a common school life ; adequate appliances for manual employment, for amusement or recreation in leisure hours ; all these entered into his idea of the "almighty wall" ; his belief that nothing should be left to be done by masters which could be accomplished by the ordinary structure of school buildings and appliances.

Out of this central idea, as he often said, Uppingham had grown by a natural process of evolution.

There is a large percentage of temptation, criminality, and idleness in the great schools—a moral miasma—generated by known causes, and as certainly to be got rid of even by mere mechanical improvements—a little moral drainage—as the average sickness of a squalid district. . . .

Bullying is fostered by harshness in the masters, and by forcing boys to herd together in promiscuous masses.

Lying is fostered by general class rules which take no cognisance of the ability of the individual to keep them ; and they cannot do so when each boy is not sufficiently well

<sup>1</sup> Address to the Teachers of Minnesota.

known for his master to understand, sympathise with, and feel for him.

Idleness is fostered, when there are so many boys to each master, that it becomes a chance when it will be detected and a certainty that no special intelligent teaching and help will be given, or indeed can be given, to the individual when in difficulty.

Rebellion and insubordination are fostered, when from the same causes many boys who are either backward or want ability, find no care bestowed on them, are obnoxious to arbitrary punishments, have nothing to interest them or give them self-respect, and learn in consequence to look upon their masters as natural enemies.

Sensuality is fostered, when these and like boys, from the same causes, are launched into an ungoverned society without any healthy interest, anything higher than the body to care for (the mental part being unmixed bitterness), thrown on their own resources, or want of resources, often exposed to scorn in school, whilst the numbers and confusion give every hope of escaping detection.

The atmosphere of schools is, in consequence, in all their out-of-the-way regions thick with falsehood and wrong; no more necessary, however, than a fog on an undrained field when the country round is clear, but considered necessary by the old-fashioned farmer because it has always been so.<sup>1</sup>

The contrast between school life as he had known it as a colleger at Eton before any work of reform had begun there, and what he lived to make it at Uppingham, best illustrates what he here says of the efficiency of structural appliances to forward intellectual and moral purposes. Throughout England in Thring's time schools had, no doubt, been gradually perceiving the truth of these ideas, and had been reforming themselves on many points of structure. How far this was due to his outspoken discussion and his example, and how far to other causes, it is not easy to say. The singularity

<sup>1</sup> School Statement.

of his relation to the question was that from the first he fixed upon final principles, framed a complete plan based on these principles, and then resolutely carried that plan into execution.

He certainly challenged attention distinctly enough to the originality of this constructive work. In a letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone in 1861 he says :—

... I believe I am correct in saying that no great school in England has any system or machinery established for dealing with each individual according to his powers excepting that which exists here.

“Truth in schools” was what he significantly called his first manifesto on the question of school structure. To the main principles of that manifesto he adhered to the last. “Talking of truth, and honour, and trust is one thing, and having the structure true, and honourable, and trust-deserving another.”

From the elements of true educational structure of which we have spoken he went on to other things.

“Honour to lessons” was a text from which he constantly preached, and it represented what he tried to carry out in practice. He believed that as far as possible the surroundings of school life should be noble and beautiful.

“Another grave cause of evil in schools,” he says, “is the dishonour shown to the place in which the work is done. Things are allowed to be left about, and not put away when finished with, great roughness is permitted in the treatment of the room and its furniture. Yet there is no law more absolutely certain than that mean treatment produces mean ideas; and whatever men honour they give honour to outwardly. It is a grievous wrong not to show honour to lessons and the place where lessons are given.”

“Honour the work and the work will honour you,”

was the epigrammatic form into which he condensed his thought. A noble schoolroom in which to meet or study seemed to him as useful in training the minds of boys as a noble chapel in which to worship. In his earlier days at Uppingham he employed photographs ; at a later period he spent a considerable sum on autotypes to beautify the walls of the class-rooms.

In a letter he says :—

I have just got a new forward move. You may remember perhaps the photographs in my class-room and the idea of culture through them. Well, I have got twenty-six magnificent autotypes of ancient art in upper school now, and I mean to turn out by degrees all the mean furniture of the room, and I hope that this will make the low views and meannesses connected with lessons and learning drop off by the mere force of fine surroundings, just as good surroundings have made the whole domestic life of the school higher, and freed it from tricks and petty savagery. . . .

Some years after the great schoolroom was built he resolved, by the decoration of its walls, to illustrate more fully what he meant by giving honour to lessons. This decoration was carried out at a cost of some hundreds of pounds under the direction of Mr. Charles Rossiter.

In his wish to stamp his idea upon the mind of others Thring made the inauguration of the room a high festival. Old boys and distinguished visitors gathered to show their sympathy, and Lord Carnarvon, who presided, was able with grace and truth to express his doubt whether, since the days of the painted porch in Athens, " training had ever been installed more lovingly or more truly, or in a worthier home." The occasion received a good deal of public notice, and speaking of it Thring says :—

"It was, I feel sure, a great birthday, and bringing into the light of day the grand principle of working with fit tools, and of having everything for the young as good as possible."

An old friend, after visiting Uppingham and seeing the decorations of the schoolroom, wrote to him :—

For my part I am a sad unbeliever (or at least a sceptic) in the effect of Pompeian red, as compared with cut names, and ink-stains ! I believe in the men, and the minds, and the courage, and the love, and the faith, and the blessing of God, which have made your school a great school and a good school. But you will forgive and overlook the scepticism and join cordially in the adhesion which I render.

The reply is characteristic :—

You don't mean what you say about the old meannesses. You only put out in a rough way the surface thought.

When St. Paul had God's express promise that he and the whole crew should be saved, he did not hesitate to say to the centurion, " Except these abide in the ship *ye cannot be saved.*" God's blessing only rested on man's right use of means. God did not think it beneath His majesty to give special orders, during the time He was training and educating His people, as to the material and making of robes, the colours of ribands, the artistic disposition of a fringe. Everything was made according to the pattern shown by God. God filled with the spirit of wisdom the men who were to make Aaron's garments. And the workers in gold, silver, brass, stones, timber, embroidery, needlework, etc., are expressly said to have been specially inspired by God during the schoolmaster period of the Law.

Now I unhesitatingly assert that my own work has succeeded with the many just because God gave me a spirit of wisdom to attend to fringes, and blue, and purple, and scarlet ribands, and Pompeian red, and autotypes, and boys' studies, and the colour of curtains to their compartments, and a number of little things of this kind. And I lay claim to have been great as a schoolmaster on this, and on this only, in the main ; on

having had the sense to work with tools, to follow God's guidance in teaching beginners by surrounding them, as He did, with noble and worthy surroundings, taking care that there was no meanness or neglect ; getting rid, as circumstances allowed, of name-cutting in school, which means "rebellious inattention, combined with mischief and vanity," or ink-splashing, which means "careless dirtiness, and contempt for the great thought-work" ; and all the little vilenesses which drag the boy-mind down. It is a slow process, but it is a true one ; it is not grand, but it is practical ; it needs patience, but it works by degrees higher life. May men think of me as one to whom God gave a spirit of wisdom to work all manner of work of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work. I take my stand on detail.

The same lesson he enforced whenever the opportunity presented itself. In an address to the Teachers' Guild in 1887 he says :—

It is hard to escape something of the pig if lodged in a sty. The schoolboy has not escaped, and never will, till "Honour to Lessons" is the first article in the nation's secular creed. Everything that meets the eye ought to be perfect, according to the work and workers, as human skill can make it. Give honour, you will receive honour. I know that boys respond with honour when they and their life-work are honoured. . . . Honour to lessons is the first article in the teacher's creed.

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At a very early stage in his work Thring formed the opinion that music might be used as a refining and elevating influence in school-training. So far as the traditions of the public schools were concerned, he was venturing out into an entirely unknown sea when he made the innovation of introducing music into his regular system of education. But he believed that, in

addition to a generally refining influence, it could also be made a means of interesting and stimulating boys not specially open to intellectual ambitions. So one of his earliest school ventures was the engagement of a music master. It was characteristic that from the very first he determined that the music given to the boys should be of the best.

In inquiring for a master he writes :—

We want not only a first-rate musician who has made music his profession, and is a master in it, but a man of personal power and go who can inspirit the boys, and breathe some enthusiasm into them.

By offering liberal salaries he was able to secure men of this stamp. The demand for musical teaching grew rapidly, so that in course of time the one music master with whom he began his experiment required the aid of six or seven assistants, while one-third of the whole school took lessons in instrumental music. The school choir, with its hundred or more trained voices, gave life and beauty to the chapel services ; the concerts of classical music became a marked feature in each term's school pleasures ; on more than one occasion the choir went to the mission districts of the school in London to give concerts for the benefit of the poor. Some of the first musical artists of the day were induced to visit Uppingham, became interested in the experiment which was being carried out, and by taking part in the concerts kept before the boys a high ideal of artistic excellence. Thring's personal contribution to this department of the work consisted in the school songs which he composed. Full of spirit, and skilfully set to music, these songs are associated with every Uppingham boy's recollections of his school life. He was much consulted by headmasters in regard to

the results of his experiment, and the example he set has been followed in other schools.

I am indebted for the following note to Herr David, the accomplished artist under whose direction school music achieved at Uppingham a distinction and excellence it has never acquired elsewhere in England, and on whose judgment and skill for more than twenty years Thring implicitly relied :—

Fifty years ago music had no place whatever in the curriculum of the great English schools, and it may be boldly asserted that Thring was the first of headmasters who fully recognised the value of the subject, and who assigned to it a not unimportant place in his scheme of education. It is true, an organist, who also gave some private lessons, was generally attached to school chapels, and choirs were connected with the colleges of Eton and Winchester. But they were professional and salaried choirs, and no gentleman's son ever thought of joining them. It is also true that school concerts were not quite unknown, but they were merely "got up" for the annual festivities—they had no connection with the work of the school—and the programmes usually consisted of music of the lightest descriptions—songs, airs, glees—now and then, perhaps, an oratorio chorus. The fact was, in those days music was generally looked upon as an agreeable accomplishment for young ladies, and as a rule an English boy would as little think of singing or playing as he would of working embroidery or knitting stockings. To do so was considered rather unmanly.

That Thring, himself quite unmusical, should have been the first to introduce music into such schools is certainly very remarkable. Like every great innovator, he was in this point, as in many others, in advance of his time.

In forming his plans for education, Thring was eagerly looking out for subjects outside the usual school range. He knew well that to give a living interest in classics or mathematics to some boys was next to impossible. His quick and well-trained eye at first drew his attention to drawing. The lovely scenery of his home county, the picturesque beauties of

Eton and Cambridge, had deeply impressed him in early days, and later on his love and appreciation for art had been roused for life during his sojourn in Italy. He had a deep and lifelong admiration for the early Italian painters, for Albrecht Dürer, and above all for Turner. He looked on art as a great moral and spiritual power. That he should have recognised the analogous power of music—the perceptive organ for which, a musical ear, nature had absolutely denied him—is certainly a wonderful testimony to the man's intuitive judgment. But the deficiency caused by the absence of any musical ear was with him to some extent balanced by the extreme sensitiveness of his organisation, and by that power of human sympathy which pervaded everything he did and said and wrote. Although he would, as a rule, candidly confess his inability to make anything of, or derive any enjoyment from music, yet on some rare occasions he would be deeply impressed, and then invariably by something really great and striking. Nobody who saw his face light up through a spirited chorus like the "Hallelujah" from the *Messiah*, or "Rise up, arise" from *St. Paul*, could doubt that he was deeply impressed. Certainly the underlying words assisted him in such instances to grasp something of the music, and the manifest enthusiasm of the performers also touched him.

The importance of musical teaching was probably first brought under his notice by his wife, who had brought from her German home a warm love for music and interest in it. The refining and elevating influences of *serious* music on those who were able and trained to appreciate it could not escape Thring's rare powers of observation. An art which appealed at least as much to feeling and imagination as to the intellect, that bugbear of his, could not fail to attract him greatly. And furthermore, the power of vocal music to enhance and emphasise the meaning of words appeared to him of great value. It was with a view to their being set to music and sung, and thus brought forcibly home to a large number of performers and listeners, that he wrote his school songs. These songs, so full of idealism and enthusiasm—how he delighted in hearing them rendered by a hundred youthful voices ! There, at least, he thought some of the sacred fire that burned in his heart had caught the hearts of the boys.

The means by which he gave to music a prominent place in his school were simple enough. In the first place, he made the attendance on singing classes and music lessons compulsory, and subject to the same discipline as any regular school subject. But above all, he gave to his music masters his full personal support and sympathy. He would frequently attend the choir rehearsals, and plainly manifest at all times his interest in the musical work done in the school. He especially gave his music masters a completely free hand in the choice of methods and the selection of works to be studied and performed. He knew how true it is that "for the young the best is just good enough." As he himself, being quite unmusical, could not judge, he wisely left the management in the hands of those he had reason to believe could judge. He would never listen to outside suggestions and complaints. In early days the cry for more "popular" and less "classic" music was not unfrequently raised even within school circles. But, like all men who are really masters of their craft, he had a strong distrust of dilettantism, and in the case of music would not allow it to meddle with the work of the professional musician. The results of this system soon became apparent. Music—good, serious music—became a prominent feature of Uppingham, more so than at any other public school in England, and it may confidently be asserted that the example of Uppingham in this respect has largely been followed elsewhere. Men like the late Sterndale Bennett, Joachim, and Villiers Stanford became warmly interested in Uppingham music, and by their frequent visits to the school, and actual participation in school concerts, gave an invaluable stimulus to the subject.

Lastly, it must be stated that Thring secured to his music masters a liberal income, and thereby enabled them to give sufficient time to every individual pupil, and thus prevent the teaching of music from remaining, as it often is, a showy sham.

With the ever-present conviction that the business of a school is to train up men for the service of God, Thring was always quick to adopt methods likely to develop the Christian as well as the intellectual activities of his boys. In this sphere, too, Uppingham was able

to do pioneer work in one of the most interesting and important movements connected with the public school and university life of modern England.

In the first years of the school large sums were subscribed to support the parish church which the boys attended, and at a later time great efforts had to be put forth for the construction of the school chapel. In spite of this strain upon the school resources, money was almost from the first freely contributed to outside purposes on the broadest lines of Christian duty and sympathy. To interest public school boys, drawn chiefly from the richer classes, in those less fortunately placed than themselves, seemed to him essential, under existing social conditions, to their growth in true life. "The rich boys must learn to help the poor boys," was Thring's remark in 1864 to Mr. G. W. Bell, one of the founders of the Boys' Home for destitute lads in Regent's Park, when he applied to Uppingham for assistance. Mr. Bell mentions how year by year he was asked to go to Uppingham to tell the boys of the work which was being done, and how the Home received from them a liberal support for more than twenty years, while the headmaster, in discussing the subject or in forwarding gifts, always dwelt chiefly upon the good which the school itself derived from the help it thus gave. In the same spirit he induced the school in later years to found a scholarship of £30 per annum for the Blind College at Worcester. Often slight notes in his diary give expression to the satisfaction he took in such work.

A passage already quoted refers to £60 sent to India in 1865 as the first worthy offering Uppingham had made as a school. In the succeeding years many like contributions found their way to various missionary fields.

In one place he says :—

I hope to-morrow to write to the New Brunswick clergyman, and tell him that we have £13:16s. from the masters, £10 from myself, and £24:7:6 from the school to send him, and also to promise him £20 a year for four years. This will cheer him at all events, please God. How strange this modern life is, with its wonderful network of intercourse, and thought, and feeling ! To think of this man on the other continent, in the far north, having a thread of life vibrating with us. After all, it is not so wonderful as the vibration from thousands of years back still throbbing and thrilling in our hearts. Θεῷ δόξα.

An old Uppingham boy became first Bishop of Honolulu ; another went to Japan as a missionary, others to India or Africa. It filled Thring with happiness to see the Christian life of the school thus going out to many distant lands, and his correspondence shows that he was constantly contributing liberally from his own private means to forward the work of his boys. One writes from South Africa to describe the examination of a group of Kaffir lads for a "Thring Scholarship," another of a like examination of Mohammedan pupils in the Punjab.

A letter from the Bishop of Brisbane mentions a church which had been built in Queensland wholly by the efforts of Uppingham boys ; other letters acknowledge large contributions for two other churches.

But the most significant mission-field of the school, and that which has had the most far-reaching results, was found nearer home.

The idea, which has since proved so fruitful, of a special school effort for mission work in the East End of London was first taken up in 1869. His diary for that year says :—

*April 17th.—An excellent lecture last night from Mr. Foy*

for the Additional Curates' Society ; one of the best I ever heard.

*April 25th.*—The school has determined to start an East London mission in consequence of Mr. Foy's lecture. We think we shall get £100 a year, and it will interest the boys. I am very much pleased with the idea. We had £17 : 18 : 3½ for our special offertory to-day.

These two slight records indicate the genesis of a movement which since that time has had a wide extension among the public schools, and which has also been taken up by the universities.

For many years the school raised £150 annually to carry on this special work in a district selected by the Bishop of London as one most needing help. But Uppingham did more than send money to the London poor. It sent men, and this was what Thring most of all valued. In 1870 Rev. Wynford Alington, a former pupil of the school, accepted the post of missionary curate, and was sent to work in North Woolwich, under the then incumbent, Rev. Dr. Boyd (afterwards Principal of Hertford College, Oxford). Here he remained till 1878, when he resigned to undertake missionary work in South Africa. The mission was then transferred to an equally poor district, Poplar, where it was under the direction of Rev. Vivian Skrine, another old boy of Uppingham.

Thring's idea was to keep the boys as much as possible in touch with the mission and its conditions. Every year the missionary in London or other friends of the cause came to tell the school of the work, its character, its progress, and its opportunities. These visits were returned. In 1872 a new church had been built in one of the poorest parts of the parish. This is what he writes in his diary of the consecration :—

*September 24th.*—Back from North Woolwich after one of the most remarkable days of my life, and one that I verily believe will mark an epoch in England. We took up forty-eight boys on Wednesday, housed them in London, and brought them on to North Woolwich next morning. In all, reckoning masters, ladies, and old boys, Uppingham mustered seventy-four strong on that day, for fifteen old boys came in, to my great delight and comfort. The Bishop of Rochester, who is a real man, was greatly struck with it, and spoke some words at the luncheon to the boys, which I think they will not easily forget. The service was very good; I was glad to hear from Anstey, who sat far down in the church, that the singing sounded very full and sweet, for we brought up a strongish choir, but I was anxious about the effect of their singing with the local singers, and I had told them to be careful to follow their lead, as we came to help and not to show off. All the boys who were able stayed to Holy Communion. The Bishop was much struck with that. He gave us an excellent, manly sermon. I am sure that day will not pass out of our school life easily. To me it gave a most cheering feeling of life. I less and less set my heart on this Uppingham here and its buildings and the local work. I confess I don't feel much hope for the future, but in the life I trust I do feel an intense faith—in the seed growing somewhere, and this North Woolwich meeting was a kind of visible embodiment of that invisible somewhere, a sort of making known of the life that has gone out and of its world-wide character, as not wanting a place, a locality; as not confined and cribbed to one form or one kind of working. I am wonderfully cheered. England has never before had this fastening of a school on to real life work in the world outside. May it increase and spread. Alington must have felt his loneliness greatly swept away as he looked on the goodly array of his school-fellows, past and present, who met to join helping hands in his work. I trust to see this mission a great central pivot of Uppingham life, as much Uppingham as Uppingham itself to our best blood, even more so, as being a more tangible idea of living work to the ordinary mind. Thank God for this. Thank God.

*September 28th.*—The more I think of North Woolwich

the more my heart rests on it. There is such a taste of life in it. Who can tell in these days what may become of buildings. Even now here in these buildings how much can I see of possible decay in the spirit within—how much of hostility in the world outside. . . . But the living hearts they cannot take away from us ; they cannot quell the spirit which united us at North Woolwich, and made school and parish meet on common ground. That is real. . . . The boys seem to have been greatly struck with their visit. . . .

A similar happy visit was made by boys and masters in 1875, when a second mission church was consecrated. Speaking of this he says :—

We crossed the river and took train for Tidal Basin. Close there is the noble new church, and soon after our boys came with the masters from town, and I met the Bishop and Mr. Boyd, with Mrs. and Miss Claughton, and was introduced to them. . . . Then we had an impressive service in that noble church, and a very large number of communicants. Then luncheon ; and when Mr. Boyd said what had been done and given I saw many eyes fill with tears. Altogether, it was a grand day—a day not to be forgotten—a day, I trust, the school will carry in their hearts to many lands.

The work did stir the imagination of the boys, and the leaven of Uppingham example soon began to work.

*June 4th, 1873.*—A letter to-day from an old boy speaking of our example at North Woolwich having spurred on some people in London to do the same for the Black Country, and the praise he heard of Uppingham at a London party, and how proud he felt, which pleased me and cheered me mightily. I read it to the school. It will do them good. . . .

Of the work done at Woolwich the Principal of Hertford College writes years afterwards :—

My feeling of gratitude to the school for the help and

sympathy it gave me so cordially when I was hard pressed in London, but deepens as the years go on.

Later, when the mission had been removed to St. Saviour's, Poplar, the method of keeping in touch with the district was changed. The chapel choir, together with the musical masters and ladies of the school, visited the place to give a concert in behalf of the poor. "If we can get this school to look on helping the poor as one of the chief things of life, what a glorious thing it is!" he remarks. "And already what a great movement, coextensive with England, has arisen out of our school mission."

In another place he says:—

It is a great thing to get the idea into the boys of giving personal help to the poor. I admit, too, I am proud, I hope not in a self-glorious way, of once more being the first to start a thing likely to be imitated and to bear good fruit.

To Lewis Nettleship at Oxford he writes advising him to take the chance which the school mission centre in London offers to come in direct contact with the actual life of the poor, as the best possible supplement to the purely intellectual atmosphere of the university, the best corrective of its unpractical tendencies, and the best preparation for high and true thinking on life subjects. The little seed thus sown at Uppingham has grown into a great tree, and but few of the great public schools of England are now without this special field of mission labour.

In the same broad spirit of practical Christianity was conceived in 1878 the formation of a school society for mutual assistance in good works, religious and secular. By associating the members, consisting of old pupils and masters, in a common and noble purpose,

he hoped to perpetuate the bond and widen the influence of the school life. In whatever part of the world they might be, its members were to be free to call upon their fellows for help in any good cause they had in hand. A noble charter for future effort was that which he gave to this society in a line written at the time of its foundation, and now inscribed on a brass tablet in the school chapel : "Let the pride of Uppingham be to have the readiest hand and the most open heart to assist one another in good work."

Nothing could exceed the affectionate interest with which he followed those of his boys who threw themselves into missionary work at home or abroad, nor the tenderness of his memory for those who, as sometimes happened, died at the post of duty. The name of Wynford Alington has been mentioned as one of the school workers at the East End of London. An inscription in the chapel at Uppingham commemorates him :—

Sincere, consistent, self-denying, unwearied—willing to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ, he went as a missionary to South Africa, and died at his post—Oct. 10th, 1879.

It was a character which he could thus describe that more than almost any other stirred Thring's enthusiasm. The diary says :—

*November 20th.*—Heard this morning the news that my best and bravest, Wynford Alington, has passed away, dying of typhoid fever in Utrecht in the Transvaal. I cannot call it sad news, though to me it is in a way sad, for I never have known intimately for years so good a man. He stands out in my mind as the perfect realisation of unselfish, gentle, persistent power that I have ever been brought near to. And I can feel a warrior's joy at his call, even though I feel a great sadness at the thought I shall see him no more on earth.

This very next week Mr. Bull is coming on the North Woolwich Mission. How much of mournful interest there now is in it all! Our first-fruits in the truest sense have been now taken. Glory to God who has given and taken!

*December 6th.*—Every day more and more brings out what an impression my hero has made. I marvel at it. He was so retiring. His example shows me how true all I have felt and said about life working has been. It comforts and cheers me to see the truth thus incarnate. When he fell ill the commander at Utrecht decided that he should be treated as an officer, as he had done so much work amongst the soldiers, sent the doctor to him, and despatched a mounted orderly after Mr. Ransome, who had just left him, and applied to the general for his sanction, which was given, and when he died they gave him a military funeral. Strange history! One little trait was very touching. The Kaffir servants make a rule of leaving a house where an illness is likely to prove fatal, but his Kaffirs stayed with him to the last, though he was not able, from the short time he had been in the country, to talk much with them.

*December 12th.*—Gervase Alington writes that an idea has been started which he does not like, of a scholarship in honour of his brother. I have written to tell him that I also detest scholarships as a memorial. There is no reverence in them. They belong to the busy, bustling brain life, and are rough and ready ways of selecting raw material, with no particle of higher life in them, mere prizes of strength, mental wrestling belts, all the associations of the earth earthy. I would not couple any one I loved with a scholarship.

*March 1st.*—We had a discussion about the Alington memorial. I said I could not stand the idea of scholarships or prizes as a memorial, making a market of the dead, and that nothing would induce me to sell the noble dead, or profane their memory by the dust and jostling of intellectual struggles.

Thring's wish prevailed, and so some time later he was able to write to another old boy:—"We are just putting up a mosaic behind the altar—'The Adoration

of the Magi'—in memory of dear Alington, that peerless knight of God's army."

In the exquisite bit of sacred art which thus adorns the school chapel Uppingham boys, new and old, may recognise at once a memorial of the pupil's noble life, and the master's ideal of the form in which honour could best be done to such a life.

Of the burning enthusiasm with which Thring began his teaching career he gave a vivid picture in an address to the Education Society in 1885. Speaking of his own teaching work while as yet he was only gathering experience in the national schools, he says:—

Many able men, Archbishop Whately amongst them, were at that time earnestly striving to put teaching into its most telling shape for the short-timed poor to get at. Indeed, a new epoch had come. For the first time in the history of the world, there was a demand that everybody should get some teaching of a regular kind. So not only the freedom of the work itself, and the fascinating novelty of untried ground, and the zeal of such fellow-workers, and the feeling of enterprise, discovery, and life was full of attraction, but a national crisis of the most momentous kind had come.

The air was full of hope, and bright with possibilities; new opportunities under new conditions had arisen, and everything pointed to a great new birth of teaching power. Something efficient had to be done to make every child in the kingdom an intelligent worker in life, in spite of lack of time, or lack of brains. That was the problem. Some thought it could be solved. And if the elementary schools could be made to do it, a new era had set in.

There was a fair field. It was clear that with the short time that could be given, and the material to be dealt with, much knowledge was impossible; but mind might be roused; interest might be awakened; a sure path might be laid down; a path into a new world, which should tempt those who set foot on it to go on. There might be a feeling of gain produced, a feeling of things pleasant in the getting, and pleasant in

the having. Mind was there. Why should not mind be dealt with? What was to prevent the exercise of new senses? of eyes taught to see and ears taught to hear? The rudder-strings of voyages through peopled worlds of mind-creations, the power to move, the hope to excite movement, pleasure, happiness, seemed within range. At least, it was not too much to hope, that the narrow walls of the dull prison, in which the omniscient ignorance of the village pot-house hero dwelt, might be broken down, and the vast beyond, with its mysterious humility of infinite delight, get a chance of being seen, or at least believed in. And if by degrees this living teaching prevailed in the schools below, and mind-power became mind-power indeed, what might not be credible in the future, when better methods and free, unfettered skill should begin their upward push, and simplify all the processes of learning? Enlightened growth by growing would displace worn-out systems; and thought and mind be moved on to their rightful throne; and intelligence, with memory as its day-labourer and servant, be lord of all in the schools.

Everything seemed possible in that dawn of liberty to work, that breaking up of the tyranny of knowledge, that wakening of love for working, and that new field for working love.

If there was no time for piling up knowledge, there were minds to be trained, and lives to be set free. And education might rise, a resurrection indeed, from the folio sepulchre in which it had been so long entombed.

From this quotation it may easily be inferred that Thring's teaching was not of the cut-and-dried type.

His whole teaching life was a protest against rule-mongering and its dry-as-dust methods. He dreamed of breaking through the monotony of the teacher's life, the treadmill round of mere preparation for the examiner, which is so apt to dry up and narrow mind and spirit in both teacher and taught.

In one of his school papers he is at pains to distinguish between the true and living teacher and the machine teacher, or, as he calls him, the hammerer.

The teacher deals with latent powers.—The hammerer hammers in a given task.

The teacher considers the worse the material, the greater the skill in working it.—The hammerer hammers at the nail, and charges the material with the result.

The teacher knows his subject to be infinite, and is always learning himself to put old things in a new form.—The hammerer thinks he knows his subject, and that the pupil ought to know it too.

The teacher loves his work, and every day finds fresh reason to love it.—The hammerer hammers at his work, and finds it more irksome every day.

The teacher thinks nothing done till the food he gives his pupils is digested and craved for.—The hammerer thinks everything done when he has hammered at the nail a given time.

The teacher encourages.—The hammerer punishes.

The teacher has faith in great principles.—The hammerer is the slave of little vexations.

The teacher is a boy amongst boys, in heart ; in judgment, a man.—The hammerer has the hardness of a man, with the want of thought of a boy.

The teacher meets the young on their own ground, and from their own point of view.—The hammerer stands above them and makes laws.

The teacher in punishing considers what is best, not what is deserved.—The hammerer applies a fixed penalty.

The teacher deals in exhortation and hope.—The hammerer in truisms and lamentation.

The teacher is animated by a high and true ideal, towards which he is ever working, to which he is ever finding some response, even in apparent failures.—The hammerer's ideal is a shallow dream of selfish success, the non-realisation of which leaves him apathetic and querulous in his work, sceptical of goodness, hardened in his own opinions, and closed against improvement.

The teacher, as he believes in his principles and rules, earnestly strives to be the best example of them himself.

Unpunctuality makes authority grating.

Little changes make authority contemptible.

Little interferences make it hateful.

Pouring out knowledge is not teaching.  
Hearing lessons is not teaching.  
Hammering a task in is not teaching.  
Lecturing clearly is not teaching.  
No mere applying of knowledge is teaching.

Teaching is getting at the heart and mind, so that the learner begins to value learning, and to believe learning possible in his own case.

It was with this ideal before him that Thring pursued his vocation as a teacher. This was the spirit he tried to impress upon the younger masters who came under his influence, the spirit which he eagerly hoped would one day prevail in schools.

It was when masters failed to understand what he meant that he despaired most about his work at Uppingham ; when Government threw its weight on the side of the mechanical teaching which produces the measurable quantity of knowledge that he despaired about educational progress in England.

Of his own actual class teaching, its power and its limitations, we have an interesting sketch in a short article, contributed to the *Athenaeum* at the time of his death by Lewis Nettleship. After mentioning that in the school games which he shared with his boys, he "always played to win," Nettleship adds :—

Into his work with the sixth form he carried the same spirit (the "racer's spirit," he used to call it), and he did not conceal his indignation at their frequent slowness to follow him. His own independence and ardour led him to expect the same in his pupils, and he sometimes rode rough-shod over those who required their intellectual food to be carefully prepared for them, or needed special tending or stimulus. But to those who came to understand him the ideas which he scattered broadcast were an education in themselves, and in talking over a copy of composition or an essay he would say things the effect of which lasted through life. In choosing

pieces of English or subjects for Greek or Latin verse he aimed at making the boys use their common sense and their imagination ; “prose” and “nonsense” were the epithets with which many a copy was ruthlessly condemned and (sometimes literally) pulled to pieces. His interest in language was part of his general interest in what he called “living power” ; it appealed to him as a vital instrument of marvellous power and subtlety, and he handled and explored it as affectionately as if it were alive.

When among his boys he did meet with response to his teaching, it touched him deeply. I find this note:—

U—— gave me great pleasure to-night. After I had looked over his Greek prose, and showed him how to do it, his face glowed, and he said I opened a new world to him, and made common things look quite different. One such speech as that from a boy makes up for a great deal of criticism, and being held cheap because I don’t hack along in a hack way. He really felt it.

Thring’s pupils agree that his power as a teacher, marked at all times, was most impressive when applied to the exposition of Scripture in his morning Bible lessons.

“Perhaps,” Lewis Nettleship writes in the article already quoted, “the most original of his lessons were those on the Old Testament. He treated the early history of the Jews as a kind of spiritual allegory. Moses, Abraham, and Jacob were types of life and character, in the minutest details of which he found illustrations of God’s dealings with man. However unhistorical the method might be, it enabled him to bring his own experience to bear upon his pupils, and it taught them religion without theology.”

Doubtless it was only the stronger and finer spirits who felt all the power and caught fully the spirit of these Bible lessons. Still the general impression made

at the time was very great. An old boy has put into my hands a large volume of notes, carefully copied out, paragraphed and laboriously indexed, which he had made as a pupil of the Upper Sixth. The remarkable care taken by a boy to preserve all that was said is a striking tribute to the power of the master.

Thring's teaching, as shown by these notes, was certainly not food for babes. It consisted of concentrated maxims drawn from the experience of life, vivid illustrations taken from passing events, a bold application of Bible examples to the facts and conditions of daily modern life. There is in it no talking down to the level of boys, but a steady lifting of their minds into the clearer air of lofty thought and noble purpose.

Fragments of correspondence, which might be multiplied indefinitely, show how permanent was the impression thus made; how living was the seed thus sown.

"I think," one writes, "that what most strikes those of your old pupils who still cherish a love and regard for your teaching is the far-reaching foresight which it contained. I mean that though we could not see it then, we learn more and more every month that, properly understood, your divinity lectures, for instance, form a kind of practical handbook for our lives. There is hardly a question in our philosophy on which some one of the great truths which you pointed out do not bear. And I believe them to be a guide and help to the highest and truest way of living. It is the greatest comfort in these difficult days of doubt, and scepticism, and speculation to have these anchors to rely upon."

And again:—

. . . I want to write you a few lines just now to tell you of a feeling of gratitude to you which has been springing up in my mind in these later days more strongly than before—gratitude

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for the "doors" you threw open to us, and for the quest of the loving eye to which you encouraged us. This germ of loving observation has been growing, I believe, feebly, no doubt, but still so as to already be making its power felt, and suffusing life with happiness through enjoyment of the beauties in the avenues beyond the "doors." It is now when I have begun to experience the value of the teaching for myself, and try to unlock the doors for other eyes and feel sometimes the hopelessness of the undertaking, that I think perhaps it would be a pleasure to you, who must have felt the same many a time in a keener fashion, to learn that even after many days fruit is appearing and blossom of gratitude to the sower.

After the opening of the decorated schoolroom a clergyman writes :—

I thoroughly appreciate what the Earl of Carnarvon said, and it stirred me up just to write and add the humble testimony of a curate to the value of the training which you gave us.

Believe me, sir, that we never forget the immense privileges which we had in our Uppingham life, and we are now, as clergy, able to put before others some of the high aims in life which you used to put before us. As far as concerns my own life, your name is always associated with any good that I have learnt to be able to do.

" You taught me at Uppingham, in your morning instructions to us, to burrow beneath the surface of Holy Scripture," writes to him one who has now become a man of mark in the English Church.

Another says :—

I have often wished, and have heard other O.U.'s wish also, that you would give to the world some of your morning lessons to the Sixth Form. I can never forget your lessons on "The grain of mustard seed" from the New, and "Privilege" from the Old Testament ; but unfortunately I mislaid my notebook when I left, and have now no tangible record of them. Perhaps many of us during our school life could not appreciate them as highly as we do the recollection of them now ; but I can assure you that in occasional encounters with Free-thought,

etc., I have found a few of your lessons of the greatest service and power.

"I do so wish," writes yet another, "that you would publish by subscription, for private circulation among your old pupils, what you told us on Instinct, Enthusiasm, Reaction, Punishment, and many other subjects. You could not do them a greater service."

And again :—

I really do value all I was taught by you more than I can say ; and as I recall some of those lessons I feel most thankful that the words in which they were clothed were so strong and so striking that even such a "thick" as myself could not forget them, and thus was led to think out what they meant.

An old pupil selected for an important Church preferment and wide field of work writes :—

I write to tell you about it not from any feeling of elation, for really it is most humbling to realise one's own unfitness, but because I always feel that whatever power of work and influence for good I may have, I owe it first and chiefly to the early training I received in those dear old days from you and Uppingham. I can assure you that your teaching, and the high motives you ever set before us as the only thing worth living for, have never been forgotten. Many a saying of yours haunts me still, and has helped, and, please God, will help me still, and it is with much gratitude that I look back to all you did for me and others. Feeling this as I do, it seems only natural to tell you about all that interests and concerns one in the work of life.

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It will be readily understood that one who held Thring's views about the living power of the teacher's work would find stumbling-blocks in anything like mechanical methods of dealing with that work, or judging it.

If education and training are the true aim of mankind, and power in a man's self the prize of life, then no superstition

ever ate into a healthy national organism more fatal than the cult of the examiner.

Such was Thring's judgment on one great feature of modern educational systems. It is a judgment which he reiterates in a thousand forms—one about which his conviction grew more intense as his educational experience increased.

A system of examination and inspection, in proportion to its power, is death to all original teaching, to all progress arising from new methods, and even to all improvement which is at all out of the routine track. . . .

There is no dead hand so dead as living power thrust in on work from the outside. It is the doctor putting his fingers on the heart when he ought to feel the pulse.

Where examinations reign, every novelty in training, every original advance, every new method of dealing with mind, becomes at once simply impossible. It is outside the prescribed area, and does not pay.

To "smash up the idolatry of knowledge" was to him the first step in true educational progress. To pile up facts and accumulate knowledge is within certain limits necessary, but it is not education. The primary object of education is to call out thought, not to load the memory,—to strengthen mind and give it versatile power—not crush it under an accumulation of undigested facts.

Do the universities, the Government, and the parents want memory, or mind?

Do they want knowledge, or strength?

With such strong affirmation and vehement questioning did Thring challenge the tendencies of a generation which he saw steadily drifting on towards "payment by results," and other equally flagrant deflections from educational truth and honesty. "The dead hand" was

the scornful phrase in which he summed up his idea of Government or other control dominating the teacher's living power ; his contempt for amateur external authority undertaking to test the living influence of mind on mind.

No one can understand fully Thring's abhorrence of the "dead hand" of external power till he has entered into his conception of what true education meant. Life passing on to other lives—the entering of mind into mind—the handing on of the torch of thought and feeling from brother to brother—from teacher to taught,—all this to him was no metaphor, but a reality.

A teacher is a combination of heart, head, artistic training, and favouring circumstances. Like all other high arts, life must have free play or there can be no teaching. . . .

Teaching is not possible if an inspector is coming to count the number of bricks made to order. . . .

The inspector destroys teaching, because he is bound by law and necessity to examine according to a given pattern ; and the perfection of teaching is, that it does not work by a given pattern.

Minds cannot be inspected. The minds of the class cannot be produced as specimens on a board, with a pin stuck through them, like beetles. Shoving in the regulation quantity is one thing, clearing the stuff out of the bewildered brain and strengthening the mind is another ; and the two are foes.

The "transmission of life from the living, through the living, to the living, is the highest definition of education," he says in one place.

And this was what people proposed to measure and gauge and ticket and pay for at a valuation, like so many yards of cotton or bushels of corn !

Yet he had himself been an examiner at Eton, at Rugby, at Cambridge, and knew well the value of

examination work. What was the place he assigned to it? A letter written to his fellow-worker, the Head-master of Sherborne, at the time when the Government was proposing to reorganise the old foundations, explains some of his views.

To REV. H. D. HARPER.

1863.

I now come to the matter of examinations, which I think simply in a series of years contains the life or death of schools and education. First, I will say that I will join you in trying any scheme in our schools that may be practicable which you think advisable after having heard what I have to say.

I start with the assertion that the curse of English education has been and is the fact that a few honour men being produced, which any clever man must produce under fair circumstances, can and does hide the fact that no great school (as the public counts greatness) is a school at all to many, yea, to the majority of its boys.

And that no teaching, I mean the applying knowledge according to the specialities of different minds, is possible for any of the boys. The masters have not time to learn how to teach, and if they knew how, have no time to use such knowledge. Facts and rules must form the stock-in-trade of such places.

Is this course to be legalised as the sovereign remedy? Is the disease to be made health by law?

I start by laying down that Government has no business whatever to contemplate any honour examination, honour standard, or honour judgment on schools.

The sole business of Government is to pass a school. First, as having efficient machinery for the work it professes to do; secondly, as doing that work on the average respectably.

These points and others raised I will now deal with more in detail. Who is to be examiner?

Are we who have been working for years to have some clever young man with a bias sent down to test our work, not, mind you, simply as our work, but comparatively with that of

five or six other schools? Now let me show some of the working of this.

In the first place, the style of examination must be adapted to the five schools, say, which are to be examined. As this is impossible, it will represent the most powerful of them—that is to say, the weaker must adapt themselves to a close external standard, or perish. Or if it represents a prevailing theory, the opposite will take place; the weaker schools will eagerly seize the idea, mould their work on it, and gather laurels at the expense of their greater and more self-reliant neighbours. In either case Procrustes is the model.

Take another view: a teaching school, call it Uppingham, is matched against sundry others of the cut-and-dried rule class. Is the teaching which is new and living, and therefore, if for no other reason, singular, to be exposed to an examination on different principles and condemned because it does not suit it? This is nothing less than saying that all originality is to be fatal by the Government plan.

Again, a school depends so much on the kind of material it gets. This is a fact. Our reputation in early days rested entirely on the care we took with individuals. Now the result was this. I know in many instances the stupid boys of a family were sent here, the clever elsewhere. Thus our real excellence stood in the way of our false excellence. How terribly would this have been aggravated had we had a Government examiner handicapping us against sundry other schools; what a temptation to drop honest work would have arisen in addition to the many already only too powerful. Then, if the exhibitions are to be open to this kind of scramble, I should never have dreamt for a moment of facing the deadly risk of making this school do true work. The guarantee of permanence would be gone, and no man would work such a work—merely to enter into a knowledge scramble with unweighted competitors. It will end in the cram private rafts carrying off the credit by cram. . . . So far of the theory, though it might be greatly enlarged.

The following extract, taken from a correspondence which touched upon the university examinations of

the school, furnishes further illustration of his point of view :—

. . . Many years ago I was examining at Eton, and set a paper in Greek translation. The boys had to read their work when done to the assembled examiners ; I also looked over it all in private. When the first paper of these translations was read out, the then Headmaster of Eton, Dr. Hawtrey, a man of great reputation, said, as soon as the boy had left the room, "How beautiful!" and gave the highest praise to it. I had observed that there was not a single point in scholarship given of those on account of which the paper was set, and I accordingly had marked the paper low. Dr. Hawtrey might fairly have held me up as an incompetent examiner from his point of view, and might justly have objected in his own school to my system of marking. We were, in fact, looking at two entirely different things. I thought, as I was examining in Greek, that I was sent down to see whether the boys knew Greek, and till they showed they did, they got little or no credit for their English style. He was of opinion that a certain undefined literary power was the thing to prize, and so gave high marks for what, in his judgment, showed this. Now, what is a good translation has never been decided, and to this hour examiners are divided into two camps on the question. I belong to one camp, your examiner belonged to another. I do not blame him. I do not desire to contest his verdict. My object was, and is, to draw attention to the very elementary state in which these teaching questions are and prevent crude legislation; to suggest that inspectors are mortal; to ask for thoughtful treatment, and for some admission in practice, at least, of the very shifting and delicate character of the experiment now in progress.

The want of a fixed standard makes much that goes on absurd, and therefore is an important fact; but it does not affect the great question that rash judgments confidently laid down and handed in to amateur tribunals can easily destroy all progress in teaching in England. I very much doubt if twenty years ago I could have carried on my best teaching in the face of the strictures and suggestions of the last five years. I would particularly draw attention to the latter fact of sugges-

tions being made to trustees. It has taken me the last fourteen years to go through the gospel of St. Matthew with my class. One of my best pupils the other day told me that I should live in memory more by that work than by anything else. But examiners come down and not only blame the work done, which they have a right to do if they do it courteously, but offer suggestions to the trustees as to how I ought to teach the Greek Testament . . . It appears to me that it is a very serious question—this snuffing out of all new methods by the *ipse dixit* of examiners. It appears to me that if a school like Uppingham is constantly exposed to remarks expressed with undue confidence, and suggestions which ought not to be made at all, the small schools and beginners must be very badly off. Grave complaints reach me of what has to be endured sometimes in the lower strata. I look on the yoke of examination now in process of formation as absolute destruction and death to all progress unless a wise caution is exercised before the system gets rigid. I am sure the university has no intention of paralysing school life. I venture humbly to adhere to my statement at the Conference as not too strong and unjust, or, I would add, based on a single example ; and I would plead on the one hand for the weak and defenceless that consideration should be shown to those engaged in the difficult work of schools ; and the other I would solemnly warn, as far as any words of mine can do so, those in whose hands the examining power lies, of the graver danger there is lest they kill all progress.

But such extracts as those given can only indicate the general tendency of his thought. "Freedom for the skilled workman" was his final word upon the question. If the skilled teacher does not know best how to do his work—how best to deal with the infinitely delicate problems of mind and life which confront him from day to day—then no external direction or examination can cure the defect.

Examination may be an admirable means of detecting inefficiency ; as a supreme arbiter of school life, as

a method of assigning the palm of mind over a whole kingdom, it is deadly.

He believed that the meshes of the examiner were steadily closing around the mind of England, and he stoutly resisted the threatened tyranny.

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The circumstances under which Uppingham was built up by Thring made his relations to the men who worked under him different from those of the ordinary headmaster of a public school to his staff. In early days especially his position was peculiarly anomalous. It was necessary to find as masters not merely men of ability, but men who had money to invest in his great educational enterprise. Into the masters thus found he had to inspire faith in himself, in the future of the school, and in the cause which he represented. But while doing this he felt bound to retain that untrammelled power of almost autocratic government which he considered necessary, and which experience seems to prove wellnigh essential to the most effective headmastership. By temperament Thring was an autocrat, as any reader of this biography will long since have discovered. As headmaster he was one on principle.

It need not be said that men sometimes chafed under his strong rule. That they chafed under it very much in proportion to their own need of a firm controlling hand might perhaps be inferred, and seems very manifest to a student of the inner history of Uppingham. But the most restless man among them could scarcely escape the conviction that in the concentrated purpose and unbending will of the headmaster lay the secret of his success; the secret probably of their school's existence, or, at any rate, of its place in the world. Nor, I think, could any

Uppingham master say that he had come to the school under any false impression as to what he had to expect in the way of government. In making appointments Thring took pains to be definite upon this point, not merely with ordinary applicants for masterships, but even in cases where long-standing personal friendship or even relationship might have left room for a less pronounced statement of his policy and requirements. A few selections from his official correspondence with candidates for school positions, taken from various periods of his school life, will make this sufficiently clear, and will also throw light upon other points which he kept in view in selecting colleagues.

I ought to mention distinctly that we have a very definite school creed and system at Uppingham, which we believe to be the best in England. The school has risen through this system, and all hangs together as a complete whole, and whilst we all discuss freely anything likely to be an improvement, our main principles are settled, and we work vigorously as one body. I feel sure that if you study our theory as given in my published works, and illustrated in the school, it will commend itself to you as a true worker; but *it must do so* if you are to join us.

I send you some of our papers to give you an idea of our plans, and I think you should also read my book *Education and School*, in order to see how far you agree with my views, as we have a real system here which I have now for eleven years been bringing out through good report and evil report, and which I should not tolerate interference with or opposition to.

I think it well to put in writing that both from theory and experience I am so convinced of the paramount importance of unity of action that I expect when a law has been passed and is law that every master will carry it out *bona fide*, whether he like it or not, because it is law. And I should make very short work of any one who refused to do so, not on account of the thing in debate, which might be in itself trifling, but on account

of the law and disobedience to law, which is in my judgment deadly in a society. I have had bitter experience on this point.

I ought also to mention decidedly what you probably know, that we have a very definite school creed and system at Uppingham, and I would not permit any deviation from it, though we live in a very free way amongst ourselves and discuss the affairs of the commonweal together. Neither should I consider the building a house to give you the slightest lien on me as headmaster in case I felt it my duty (*quod absit*) to condemn your work. Your only guarantees would be the fact that the house being your own property, you can command the market at any fair rent for it for school purposes, and would have a prior claim—that is, I would not allow a house to be built to throw an already existing house out of the school unless under outrageous circumstances of rent, etc. ; and secondly, that the school is not now on its trial, but that you join a body which has grown and become great on these principles of government. The masters who take boarders have mostly built their own houses. I should consider a house for fifteen boys would rent at £100 a year. No salary is received by the boarding-house masters. . . .

To a brother :—

Of course you would come here with the full intention of carrying out my system as now established, the principles of which are laid down in my pamphlets. Also, as I mentioned on Thursday, whilst I hold that free discussion in most cases is good and praiseworthy, I utterly repudiate any claim that has been or may be hereafter advanced that the investing of capital here gives a master any title whatever to encroach on the headmaster's authority. This system was entirely set on foot by me, and for many years all the burdens and risk of it as a new system were borne by me alone. Men invest because they care for the system, believe it sound, and trust to my management. That management power I do not sell. I neither could nor would undertake the responsibility with my hands tied. No man would. Free discussion does not mean power to interfere, or angry resistance, active or passive,

when a question is settled. On public grounds I am not afraid to subject my policy and rule to any scrutiny. But where justice is done to all each may sometimes think himself aggrieved. Neither do I pretend to be perfect, but I try to do my duty with a single heart. I work like a horse; no one can tell the petty incessant cares which come on me alone, and I ask the forbearance of those who work under me. . . .

In another case he says :—

I need scarcely say how glad I should be to have you join me, and having seen the school rise from 25 to 170 by clinging to truth in spite of all difficulty, I perhaps feel more than another would the confidence of a good cause. First of all, there is no external interference whatever; the governors neither do, nor can, meddle with any of us. I am the only power over you, and whilst I hold to the necessity of there being one ultimate *fiat* in any society, my wish and practice is to make the government as constitutional as possible. We discuss most questions that arise in common, and I never shut my ears to anything that is to be said. In your own work you would have great liberty. I consider each man responsible for his class, and provided he keeps to the main school habits, do not meddle with him. I can honestly say I do not believe you would find your liberty unpleasantly infringed upon by working with me. Still, if a thing is after all decided on, I hold it is a necessity that it should be cheerfully acted on in any society. . . .

To a master on appointment to a house :—

I congratulate you on obtaining your wish. I sincerely hope that the duties and rewards of your new responsibility may find you daily better and better. There is only one secret to make this so—the putting first always the boy life and its good. Life is infinite and gives infinite interest to him who studies it for Christ's sake. All else passes. As regards myself, your good work will always reward me. . . .

With the offer of a mastership :—

I offer it to you out of sundry candidates, because I believe you have a teacher's heart and will care for the boys,

and improve in power of teaching in consequence. A lecturer soon gets his subject into a perfect form, and then it becomes a bore to him. A teacher never does, for his subject is the human being, and the problem is ever new. We shall want your history power, as we are reorganising our history scheme. . . .

I wish to be plain about the main points, though there is no need to write at length in the first instance. My own beliefs are decided Church, but I am *broad* towards other people who are religious, but no irreligious man can be appointed by me. Again, I am very strong on the matter of *teaching*, by which I mean applying knowledge to the individual boy, however stupid he may be. I consider it a great science of infinite interest. You will have to take a low class if you come, and unless you take that view your place is not here.

To a candidate for a mastership :—

I quite agree in your view of religious influence. I am a strong churchman; my only desire has been to do a work for Christ. But I believe my Master condemned all proselytising when he condemned the scribes, and that all attack of others is wrong. So I never permit anything but the teaching of our own truths without any attempt to overthrow the beliefs of others.

Again, I want a master with go and teaching power for a low class. By teaching power I mean that a man looks on the boys as his subject and on his books as things to be adapted to them, and accepts as his motto, "the worse the material the greater the skill of the worker." Thus a low class is not low work. Again, I have been at work for many years and have decided views on education, and I expect the men who come here to carry out those views, though I leave a good worker to work in his own way.

There is the following note in the diary of a discussion with a master who had been for some time at Uppingham, and was now considering the question of attaching himself permanently to the school :—

I told him I thought that was rather his concern than

mine ; that he had been here long enough to know our ways on the whole and to be quite sure, if he considered matters, that I was not likely to spare any man if he stood in my way. That I could say that I had acted in all good conscience here to this day, but that I would go over my own son if he rebelled and marred our work. That I did not like fighting, but if I fought I liked being licked still less, and had stood at bay here against the world and masters too with ruin at my feet, and did not fear, I thought, the face of living man. He knew our life ; it was for him to consider whether it suited him. We have been pretty plain spoken to one another, and he has letters of mine to the same effect.

Of a master he says :—

He must learn the terms of the government here, which he seems to consider a pure democracy of which I am the executive. He must find out that neither in principle nor in fact am I going to give up the supreme command in a place entirely created by labours and sacrifices which have left me still in debt, and which oblige me to sell to him much below its value and at a great annual loss the house he now lives in.

Again :—

I mean to deal with the independent grumbling with a high hand.

Under conditions thus clearly stated men accepted service at Uppingham. It was perhaps easier to state conditions than to ensure their being fully observed. Loyalty to a great man and a great cause makes its demands upon subordinates and followers. Critical battles could not be won if every subaltern asked the why and the wherefore of each movement, and stayed to discuss when he should be acting. Thring himself thought that on the whole he had failed signally in leading the men around him. Criticism in abundance he could always rely on having—of obedience he could not be so sure.

As a leader he certainly made large demands upon

his followers. His convictions were so intense, he saw so clearly the path along which he must move to his mark, that he had little patience with men of less insight, or men of weaker purpose. "I am sick," he writes, "of the half-gelded characters who cannot see practical truth, *semivirique boves, semibovesque viri*, half calves, half men, who, because something can be said on the wrong side, lose any clear, sharp conception of there being a right side."

So no small part of the battle of school life for Thring was in his relations with masters. Much loyal co-operation he certainly received, and this he was always ready to acknowledge. But there was much hesitating and half-hearted support, which made his uphill battle harder than it would otherwise have been. Time after time he laments that the energy which should be given to his boys is frittered away and exhausted in dealing with masters' quarrels, listening to masters' "jaw," or repressing incipient rebellions in his staff. Let it be remembered that his experience is not singular. "The boys are the lightest part of it; the weariness of the task lies in managing the thirty masters." This was the reply made but very lately by a distinguished headmaster of one of the best known public schools of England to a remark about the crushing weight of care apparently involved in being responsible for the welfare of 500 boys.

The story is current in school circles that another well-known headmaster owed his success in managing a difficult staff to the fortunate possession of a deaf ear which could be turned in bland attention to critical and argumentative assistants at masters' meetings, without biassing the final judgment delivered when the debate was closed. A fable, perhaps; but fables do

not become current unless they furnish illustration of truth.

But Thring had not the deaf ear, nor yet the placid temperament or the easy tact which might have furnished substitutes for it. The very qualities which made him a great master of boys and a leader of educational thought disqualified him in some measure for patient dealing with ordinary men. He saw by intuition truths which others reached only by long processes of thought and debate ; he saw them with a vividness which made him impatient of those who only realised them dimly.

Other men flagged, he never did. In thirty years he was never once late for first school, and the fact was but a type of the standard of school duty which he fixed for himself, and expected to find in others. Other men like to rest on their arms and enjoy the fruit of victory after the long fight ; with him success suggested only new fields of endeavour. Starting with higher educational ideals than any other headmaster of his time, his views kept widening with every step made in advance. Prepared as he was himself to make any sacrifice for the welfare of the school, it was probably demanding too much of human nature when he expected each master to be imbued with the same spirit of self-sacrifice.

His attitude towards men who had invested money at Uppingham and were inclined to presume upon this circumstance was very determined.

The diary says in 1863 :—

The last Saturday of a very severe quarter ; one of the most severe both in work and fret that I have ever passed. . . . The floating notions of masters that their investing here was a favour to me and a tie and claim on me have come

to the surface and broken out with great danger, and in H——'s case with great pain to me. But this I never will for a moment concede. Their interest and work entitle them to a respectful hearing, but it is no ground for rebellion. I have written to Mr. C—— telling him my terms if he stays here, and laying down very strongly that if he builds a house here, he does it because he trusts the system and trusts my management, not that I sell any fraction of my management to him or any one else.

The following letter, written on the appointment of a master, will make this position clear, and it illustrates the method pursued at Uppingham in maintaining the schoolhouses, fixing the terms of succession, and defining the relation of masters to the school :—

I have been thinking over the matter, and arrived at the conclusion to appoint you to a mastership here at Christmas next on the following terms which we have already more or less discussed.

You undertake to buy Mr. C——'s boarding-house at the cost of £3400. The house holds our full number of boarders, thirty, plus a scholar, and is sold to you by Mr. C—— for the same sum that he gave. There is a mortgage of £1300 on the property which can remain if you like.

A master receives £65 per boy out of the £75 charged. For two years you would be required to pay 5s. a quarter for each boy in your house towards our building fund, and to make a payment of £50 within that time for the same purpose, and pay on each new boy in your house £1 entrance for the same purpose.

I lay great stress on the diet and living of the boys, as I consider it belongs to moral training, and I require your house in this respect, more especially in the matter of beer, to be kept up to the standard kept by my own house. . . .

Supposing that I found it necessary to give you the six months' notice that always vacates a mastership here, or you did the same to me, *whatever* the cause, I should endeavour to get you clear of the place without loss or further incon-

venience, but I will not enter into any engagement with you to get the house bought. I did not do so with C——; I have never done so. A master comes here on his own judgment that it is worth his while to do so. I look upon that part of the business as a bare trade fact, and enter into no contract whatever beyond giving the appointment on certain terms, which terms are framed *quite independently* of a man having invested capital or not done so in the school.

Every master here holds as a master, not as a house owner. Nevertheless I do my best, as I think any head would, to make things easy for men who go.

A letter written to one of his staff suggests the kind of difficulty with which he had to deal, and the temper in which it was met.

I am not a constitutional monarch in the sense you use the term. I am as one listening respectfully to my parliament, but with full liberty to pass or reject their bills. You *cannot* share the main responsibility of the school if you wished. I wish you could. My position is far more that of a military commander who must act on his own responsibility, however much he may listen to advice, and who is liable at every turn to have great plans smashed by his officers acting in a piece-meal way, as I have had here again and again. . . . I wish to goodness I was not head here, but as long as I am, to the best of my power, I will do my duty by all and will not be the mere *executive* of a majority. I bow much to well-considered opinions, but none of you sit in the centre of the web and look along all the threads as I do. And I never mean to give up to another hand the final control of anything, though I strive as much as possible to engage the co-operation of others. The system I have pursued in this has made this school what it is, and I am not going to alter it now.

And again:—

*February 16th, 1869.*—This morning I spoke very quietly and firmly to the assembled masters on the matter of house management and treatment of the boys, in consequence of complaints that have from time to time been made; I told

them I thought it necessary to lay down the basis of the school here clearly, and to point out that any shortcoming in this was a far more serious offence against our system and society than a shortcoming in teaching, as it touched the life and training in a far more fatal way, and that I should consider any case either of niggardly or neglectful management, clearly proved, a thing which would bring with it dismissal from the mastership. Some men made a few observations which had the effect of bringing out my meaning better, but it was listened to very quietly, and I feel greatly relieved at having had it out, and condemned so strongly the selfish habits creeping in.

He insisted strongly on exclusive devotion on the part of his masters to their school duties.

While glad to find as masters men who were clergymen and had some experience in parochial duties, he yet did not think that school and clerical work could be advantageously mingled.

Writing to Chancellor Wales on this point he says :—

I have never seen reason to doubt the truth of the principle on which I based the school originally, that it is impossible to do clerical and school work together. The work of a clergyman requires undivided attention if properly done, so also does that of a schoolmaster. I have tried both. I cannot betray the trust reposed in me by the parents or permit any master to do so. . . . In early days, as Mr. William Earle knows, the giving up his curacy was the condition of working under me on my system,

To a master :—

I am greatly surprised at your note. There is an iron rule and always has been prohibiting masters from taking duty. I have taken the trouble to refer to my original letters to you on your appointment. In the very first written I find the words, "that no parochial duty is either required or *permitted*,"—the word underlined, as above, and I incurred much

ill-will in this neighbourhood on account of not permitting any master to take duty for the neighbouring clergy. I consider a master as bound to be in chapel as to be in school; I consider the regular attendance of masters at their posts in this quite as important. If masters have broken this great rule without informing me I am ignorant of it . . . . Excepting in cases of absolute necessity, after leave asked, no master must be absent from his Sunday duty at Uppingham, or leave his house and chapel class.

In fixing the new constitution of Uppingham School, Thring himself suggested the insertion of a clause providing that the headmaster should be subject to dismissal at six months' notice without reason assigned. On the other hand, he claimed for the headmaster the right to dismiss assistant boarding-house masters without their having the privilege of appeal to the governing body. Both these points he considered essential to the most effective working of a great school. I find a note among his papers, apparently written in answer to some question, bearing upon this point.

In my opinion the boarding-house masters and the headmaster ought to be dismissible without appeal. Occasional acts of injustice and occasional suffering are far preferable to the heavy, constant downward drag of bad masters and the difficulty of getting rid of them. I believe the main cause almost of inefficiency in schools is the nerve and courage it requires to deal with bad masters. A headmaster will endure almost anything rather than have a disturbance with a master who is in a position so responsible as that of a house-master is, and over a series of years amongst the number of such masters there is a constant downward drag.<sup>1</sup>

In another place he says:—

<sup>1</sup> In the case of assistants who had not the naturally strong position of boarding-house masters, he thought that some opportunity of appeal might at times be a necessary protection against the action of an ill-tempered or injudicious headmaster.

The fact is, no cause has more dragged down schools than the difficulty of getting rid of bad masters, head and assistant. No case can ever be proved against a schoolmaster.

A case can be proved against a bad man who may be a schoolmaster also, but the faults which make schools useless and unworkable *are incapable of proof*. Moreover, a head-master will do almost anything rather than proceed against an assistant master. It is like breaking your windows and letting in the storm on a winter's night.

Again, assistant masters as a body are often ignorant of everything necessary for carrying on a system and are full of crude insubordination.

Governors, again, as a body, often have been, and often will be, by the present system, a great incubus on schools, as it is not always possible to find competent men, and if competent intellectually, they are non-workers—live statues, without interest in the question or understanding of it. . . .

A Court of Appeal is a roundabout statement of the simple fact that masters shall be rendered more incompetent than they are, and that it shall be impossible to dismiss masters for incompetency.

It will be observed that the arbitrary system which Thring thought best in dealing with assistant masters he was ready to have applied equally to himself. In his opinion the temporary interest of the individual should, in both cases, be subordinated to the permanent welfare of the school.

I doubt, however, if he carried out his principles in practice as vigorously as he expressed them in theory. Life would have been easier and pleasanter to him if he had done so. More than one master who persistently thwarted his plans, gave but half-hearted support, or who fell far short of his ideals, and so was a constant thorn in his side, was suffered to go on at Uppingham, year after year, simply because the head-master's heart triumphed over his head. In a note written in 1872 he says of a master:—

I know the boys despise him, yet I feel sure it is not right to turn him out, and, perhaps, the very fact of his foolish ways may be to them a great training, as I hope it is to me, for certainly my patience is sorely tried, and I am always in some dread lest the good feeling of the school should give way and something unpleasant happen between the boys and him. I remember when a young man what short work I made in my judgments of people who were not up to the full mark, how readily I turned them adrift in my mind, and condemned people in authority for not doing so. I think I am wiser now, and act more in accordance with God's plan of the world in bearing patiently with very imperfect instruments, provided they try and do their special work fairly well, even though their collateral threads are poor stuff. At least, I believe justice never can be wrong, and that justice means much long-suffering.

Thring was far from unconscious of the faults of temper and errors of judgment which were mingled at times with the earnestness and sincerity of his work. They were, indeed, constantly before him. To the outside world he usually presented a front of absolute self-confidence. In the assertion of his conceptions of truth he was positive, not to say aggressive, and his faith in the accuracy of his own methods seemed absolute. He appears to have thought this self-confidence instinctive and hereditary, and speaks of a letter from one of his brothers as "written with all the infallibility of our race." But behind this external air and inward feeling of assurance there was also a constant self-examination and searching of heart as to his motives, his genuineness, his singleness of purpose, his faithfulness to the work which he believed God had given him to do. Nowhere was this more manifest than in his dealings with the men who served under him. Proofs of this might be multiplied, but a single illustration will at least explain my meaning.

He had for some time been particularly anxious to get rid of a master who had been a sore trial to him at Uppingham. This master was a candidate for a headmastership, and Thring was told that his recommendation would virtually carry with it the appointment. Of this he says :—

I don't know that I was ever more tried in the speaking of truth than to-day ; more tempted on many sides, but I am thankful to say I have been true. . . . I could not say it. I feel so strongly, and always have felt the conviction that he is no ruler. I was most tempted—tempted by my desire to get rid of him very strongly, tempted by my wish to do him a kindness, tempted by my dislike to stand in his way, tempted by the thought that my opinion may be wrong ; and that to say so little would be enough. But no—I do believe it, I always have believed it, and I was asked in a way which would make it false to conceal this. I said all I could, but just not that one thing which would certainly have rid me of him, and I fear I am saddled with him here now permanently. But I am comforted in having resisted the temptation, which was all the worse, as making me the instrument of what he would deem his punishment, which I dislike the feeling of even more than I dislike not getting rid of him by a *euθανασία*. . . . I am strangely moved by these conflicting feelings, but I am quite sure I have been honest, as I have held the opinion in my heart when I liked him equally with now when I do not, and the not liking him is a most powerful reason for getting rid of him, even if it did not set me more than ever to scan motives and be careful not to do an injustice. Yet, oh how I wish it had not come to me to be the instrument against him. I certainly have lost respect for him very much during these trials. His judgment on men seems childish and on facts not much better.

One more letter is added by way of illustrating the relations which existed between Thring and his masters. It was written to one whose name will always be

closely connected with his in connection with the early history of Uppingham, one who had done much for the success of the school, for whom he felt the strongest affection, and for whose loyal support he was never tired of expressing the deepest gratitude. There came a day when they differed widely, as strong men will, on questions affecting the school.

Thring writes :—

*February 16th, 1863.*—I know there is that between us which no others here share, and am perfectly aware that your feelings have moved you in these matters. I never can forget the past ; the recollection will not be effaced or diminished ; no change can alienate it, or prevent the links being renewed at any time. But the past was based, in the Psalmist's expressive language, on our walking in the house of God as friends ; on our counting no feeling, no interest, no personal matter higher than the common cause, the great work of our Master. So long as this was the case, nothing divided us ; when it shall be the case again, nothing will divide us. But all my life here has been devoted to this ; in weal or woe no private feeling or private interest, God be my judge, has stood between me and the end. I know the cost ; I do not repent it. I know what I might have been ; I know what I am, but still “the work goes on and slacketh not.” . . . But whether the manner has been right or wrong in me, no society could endure which allowed such anarchy. . . . I have learnt to believe that even the evils of life, in a good cause, are made to bear good fruit, a thought which almost makes my gratitude greater and affection stronger when out of trial comes forth good, than it would have been without the trial. For you my feelings are in one sense quite unaltered. Your place may be empty for a time in my heart, but no man can step into the empty place or fill the void. There it remains whenever you choose to take it again on the old footing. It is not any personal feeling, but the eye fixed on the invisible standard round which we are ranged which will make us one. . . .

Partly owing to the differences of opinion referred to, partly to other circumstances, this fellow-worker withdrew from Uppingham. Years afterwards, when dying, one of his last requests was that he might be buried as near as possible to his old headmaster.

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Thring had been brought up under a severe system, and one of the great objects of his educational plans was to alleviate the miseries and do away with the meannesses of school life as he had known them. But he could be severe too. Not Dr. Keate himself could be more stern and unrelenting than he when deliberate and premeditated evil had to be crushed.

He objected strongly, for instance, to the method of getting rid of school failures by expulsion. On the other hand, when once a capital code had been fixed and clearly explained he had slight mercy on wilful offenders.

#### TO A PARENT.

... I am indeed exceedingly grieved at having been obliged to pass such a sentence. But in a public school, apart from any other knowledge, I deem the getting out at night a crime never to be pardoned. ... But in any case it is known to be expulsion. I have again and again declared it to be, as an utter defiance of all order, authority, and trust. ... I am indeed exceedingly sorry for the affliction it must cause you, ... but in a great school there is no possibility of relaxing any of the capital penalties. ...

Though perhaps no master ever took more pains to provide that flogging should not be employed indiscriminately, or without full trial and judicial condemnation of the offender, he yet believed firmly in the use of the rod.

He mentions that in his earlier experience in national

schools he had once made the experiment for six months of never employing corporal punishment, but that he found it necessary to return to it.

This judgment his mature experience confirmed, and it was one which he was always ready to justify.

He writes to a parent :—

With respect to corporal punishment, I think I can easily put you in possession of our main principles. The better the school the less corporal punishment there will be, but I hold it from experience to be idle to think that a large school can be properly managed without. First of all, I conceive corporal punishment to be the proper retribution for breaking main discipline rules, *e.g.* not coming back at the proper time, being out of a partition in a sleeping-room at bedtime, making a disturbance ; and secondly, in the case of little boys, for deliberate idleness. Learning is *pain*, and unless the unwillingness to face the one pain is met by another pain there is no remedy. Setting additional tasks in a good school soon clogs work. What can be more absurd than to increase a boy's work because he has failed to do the ordinary portion ? This is making bricks without straw with a vengeance. Keeping boys in, again, is detrimental to health ; any food punishment is the same. I hold, therefore, that whilst all fair excuses should be weighed and judged, and no isolated act is to be punished with flogging, excepting in rare cases, the machinery of a school will soon get clogged if there is not this quick and effectual way of cleaning scores in bad cases. Contrary to most opinions I do not inflict floggings for lies or sin against God, unless they violate school order too. I hold it to be very injurious encouraging the notion that a punishment at school can cancel in any way grave moral faults, and if it can be done I keep such cases quite apart from school punishment, preferring to speak to boys and try to bring them to a due sense of their guilt. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following passage touches upon this question and also illustrates the influence of Thring's thought upon one of the most vigorous educational thinkers of modern France :—

“ In truth, I find two total and absolute contradictions in the teacher

## TO A PARENT.

Though it is not possible in a letter to enter fully into the question raised by your note of this morning, yet it requires some notice from me. First with respect to punishments. One of the main distinctions of a great public school is that in punishment passion and caprice should be eliminated. At Uppingham there is but one time for flogging—twelve o'clock each day ; any offence, whenever committed, is reserved till then, and I myself always inflict it . . . .

No man is more alive than myself to the fact how easily punishment is made by a bad master the substitute for efficiency ; everybody here is aware of this. The masters are not inefficient, and take special care with their pupils. I have yet to learn that a society of boys or men gathered from all quarters is to be managed without punishment, or ever has been. The question is reduced to a choice of punishments, and in spite of modern cant, I think flogging is the very best remedy for some breaches of discipline particularly. Our dormitories are not large ; your boy would not have been

as imagined by the well-known Bishop of Orleans, and the as well-known Mr. Thring. 'Respect and authority' are the watchwords I meet with everywhere on the one side ; 'Freedom and independent development' are those of the other. For centuries in France education is an authoritative, an arbitrary, and oppressive process. This is so self-evident that it requires no proof. Whatever the specific form, the principle is for ever the same ; the autocracy has always subsisted, and the Jesuits have simply bequeathed their modes of teaching to the university ; the master is a surgeon who operates on the child he has to educate. The object is to give the habit of submission. Mgr. Dupanloup's system produced discipline. The headmaster of Uppingham has left a host of admirers and fellow-workers. . . . In every sense the methods are divergent ; nor do the students of one country as yet at all comprehend the results achieved by the other ; the French, for example, unreflectingly decry the custom of flogging in English public schools, and never realise the fact that in France we flog the spirit, not the flesh—we flog the spirit till it is put down !"

The original expression is :—

"En France nous ne fouettions pas la chair, mais l'esprit ; et l'esprit nous le fouettions jusqu'à ce qu'il soit dompté. Il saigne à l'intérieur."—M. Pierre de Coubertin, Address at Brussels Conference.

found out had they been uncared for. I demur to the wisdom of perpetual surveillance, and do not mean to allow it here. Boys should be trusted, and if they break trust punished. . . .

While sturdily defending the right of the master to inflict corporal punishment he took the greatest precautions that no boy should be thus punished except under strictly defined conditions.

Foremost among these conditions was one which strictly limited, in his opinion, the numbers to which a public school should be allowed to grow. He says :—

A headmaster is only the headmaster of the boys he knows. If he does not know the boys the master who does is their headmaster and his also. The graduation of classes, and above all, the headmaster knowing each boy, and the assistant masters having to make *viva voce* complaints to him, knowing that he knows each boy, these ensure care and justice, and keep all the masters attentive to the discipline, preventing all arbitrary work.

His method at Uppingham was to himself inflict all corporal punishments.

"No master," he says in a note, "can in the slightest degree deviate from the plan of punishment laid down for the school by the headmaster. No assistant master is allowed to inflict corporal punishment. This the headmaster does with a cane on the back, at a fixed time and place, after a *viva voce* complaint from the master who wishes the boy to be punished."

The following note occurs in his diary :—

*February 2nd.*— . . . Had in D\_\_\_\_ and B\_\_\_\_ after chapel to-day and convicted them, and told them that I should require their withdrawal at the end of the term, and I flogged them severely. I was deeply touched after their caning by their coming up to me, and D\_\_\_\_ said, "But won't you forgive us yourself, sir? Do forgive us yourself!" I assured them I would, and that I never would recollect it against them if they went on well, and that I thought they

had slipped into their evil without being aware of what it really meant. Indeed, I could have cried myself, so much did I feel the trust and honour that these two poor fellows showed for me. It did cheer my heart wonderfully to feel what a true sense of the loving justice with which even heavy, very heavy punishment was inflicted had got into the school, when convicts in the midst of their punishment recognised it and felt it so. It is a glorious reward for much sorrow to have made such an impression on the bad boys of the school.

"A little judicious blindness and deafness," he remarks in one place, "is a great virtue in a wise teacher."

A master came to him and said, "A—— must be caned ; he has been very insolent." Thring agreed, and A—— was caned. A week later the master came and said, "A—— must be crushed ; he has repeated his insolent conduct." Thring turned and said, "A—— shan't be crushed ; he is a very good boy, but just at present he is standing at bay like a rat in a corner. Punish him slightly for this, and for the next month shut your eyes resolutely to everything you are not obliged to see." This plan answered, and the boy was rescued from rebellion, and the master and school saved from a great scandal which it was afterwards found might have been the outcome of the case.

#### To a HOUSE MASTER.

Your letter about W—— causes me great concern and perplexity. I quite admit the difficulty of such a case, but I do not see how to deal with it.

Two things are apparent at once as general axioms : That much evil of a certain kind has to be put up in God's world, and any attempt to escape from this fact into a special circle has always ended in worse. The whole question of the existence of evil in a society seems to me to be opened up the

moment anything short of facts within the clutch of the law is brought forward. And secondly, the failure in the training power if a boy has to be got rid of.

I do not say that such failure is necessarily any fault. It is clear that a system will not stand above a certain amount of strain ; but, nevertheless, in all cases where it breaks down there is need of anxious examination whether it was inevitable or not.

I have already once before this term been responsible for the extremest measures against a boy for this same sort of impalpable rebellion. I have only once before, and that was in very early days, proceeded to such lengths, excepting in the case of proved offences and grave breaches of law. If W—— breaks law he must answer for it. But even then much can be done in seeing the right thing at the right time, and not seeing too much. I do not think we are concerned with his influence on others unless he comes within the law a bit more than with T——'s influence, for instance, which is infinitely worse, but quite out of reach. I cannot but think you are too sensitive on this point. In the long run patient endurance and management does much more than summary measures which boys do not appreciate. They are very ready to make martyrs even of real criminals.

Of the way in which Thring's severity was qualified by tenderness, and his righteous justice as a schoolmaster mingled with pity, we have a striking picture in the "Memory" of his old pupil, Rev. J. H. Skrine :—

First of all, we were much afraid of him. This was well. Without denying the contention of the individual mother that her boy can only be led by kindness, the uncongenial truth is, that for boys in their collective capacity, fear is at any rate the *beginning* of wisdom. Probably it will not be disputed that he was the most formidable schoolmaster of his age. If asked for an account of our fear, we should say that the power of inspiring it was a part of his magnetism ; and it is no use describing it further than to say that, when boys saw the lines of his upper lip stiffen like iron, and the sheet lightning begin to play in his steel gray eyes, they did not

lightly provoke the discharge ; and that if he broke in on a scene of misrule with his characteristic cry of " Law-breakers!" and the query, " Will you obey orders ? "—why, we decidedly thought we would.

But the dread of him was not only instinctive ; it was a reasoned dread too. He inspired fear because he felt none, or so we thought. We believed that he would go to any length to keep his word. There was no getting to the back of his resistance to wrong-doing. . . . But if fear is the beginning of wisdom, it is the beginning only, and as an agency in discipline is even less essential than justice. Now of his justice we no more doubted than of his terribleness. There are, however, different types of justice, as there are of courage, and what we admired in his was less its reasonableness than its righteousness. Occasionally, and in lesser matters, we thought him one-sided in his estimate of a transaction, unready to take our point of view and entertain pleas which we believed had reason in them ; severe beyond human standards in his language of condemnation, and given to bringing down the naked edge of a " principle " with unconventional austerity upon poor human conduct. But we were sure that his justice would be pure ; that passion would have nothing to say in it, nor respect of persons ; that offenders would have a fair trial, and judgment go upon broad intelligible ground. The boy who, under examination on some rather grave c. . . , broke out with " I know I shall have justice, sir," spoke the general belief. There may have been a few mistakes with which the memory of some will tax him, but they will have been mistakes of judgment. Who can administer justice so long and not make them ?

But if his severity and justice made discipline inevitable, it was another quality which commended it to us. Among the secret springs of discipline was his tenderness. His tenderness was of that pure, sound, love-compelling quality which belongs to natures of which the grain is stern. . . . Probably it was best known to a boy who, getting into some trouble, or looking as if he soon would do so, was sent for of an evening to receive what we named a " paternal." Over such intercourse a veil ought to lie. But the results were always visible. No boy but came away softened and raised. He had a power

of finding where the spark of fire lay hid in the coarsest of human clay. In that art he was supreme, and he did for the common natures what no one else, we think, has done.

The secret of his art lay mainly in two powers. First, he had a masculine understanding (sympathy is altogether too soft a word for the purpose) of the plain, simple temptations to which youthful flesh is heir. A boy, in whom the dangerous impulses were strong, felt that the warning or the counsel came from one who owned an animal nature as forcible and enjoying as his own, and who, when he spoke of the conquest of the senses, was not speaking conventionally or of any shadowy battle. . . .

The second power was a rarer one, and a higher. It was the intensity of his feeling for the worth of a life. Of any and every life. The gifted among the young seldom fail to find those who will inspire them, and tempt forth the moral ambition. That is an easy and a genial task. But the plain, ungraced, ungifted nature, without destiny or distinction, for whom, in our inhuman phrase, "there is no future," whose mortal progress is but from a school's lower benches to a counting-house desk—was there any one who, like him, could cast a beam on this, and make it suddenly grow wonderful in its owner's eyes? A few minutes in that study's privacy, a few score words, broad and plain, and gentle without a touch of sentiment, and the heavy-witted, leaden-natured boy had looked and seen himself in an enchanted mirror. Could this be his own dull self which was imaged there, in such an outline and so glowingly? Why then, if life was like this, it was worth while trying to be good. . . .

There was a prevalent belief among those best acquainted with English public school life that the question of school morals had been faced at Uppingham more fully and fearlessly than in any other of the great schools. The knowledge of what Thring had done led to his being asked in 1884 by his old friend, Harvey Goodwin, Bishop of Carlisle, to address the Church Congress, which that year met at Carlisle, on "The

Best Means of Raising the Standard of Public Morality." His address attracted much attention for the bold and yet delicate touch with which he treated the question in its relation to school life. And certainly of all the problems which the training of boys presents to parents or masters, that of dealing with impurity in thought, word, and deed is the most difficult, and at times the most perplexing. To detect and check the subtle beginnings of impure thought ; to create a healthy disgust for impure conversation ; to set up all possible guards against the temptation to impure act ; to arm boys for the inevitable struggle with their own lower nature or against the influence of evil associates, are tasks that call for insight, tact, judgment, moral courage, and every other quality which goes to make up training skill. Many a master or parent, strong to deal with everything else, finds himself paralysed by the subtlety of the problem he meets with here. While he knows that reticence is often dangerous, and that many a boy drifts to physical and moral shipwreck simply through the ignorance to which a false delicacy or sensitiveness leaves him, he knows also that an untimely or thoughtless freedom of discussion has perils almost as great. He must decide in individual cases upon that stage in a boy's life, varying with different temperaments, where ignorance is the best protection, and that further stage where acquaintance with his own constitution and the functions of life, combined with knowledge of the fatal consequences of sins of impurity, can alone be trusted as a safeguard. On no subject of school life did Thring think more deeply or strive more diligently to discover the true principles and method of treatment.

He felt that the advantage or disadvantage of public school life often turned largely upon this moral issue.

He knew that in the struggle between purity and impurity of thought lies for many boys, perhaps for most boys, one of the first decisive turning-points of life.

A great public school, in bringing large numbers of boys together, undoubtedly concentrates evil, and creates the chance for evil to be infectious. But it concentrates good too ; it gives wise management its best opportunity, and makes possible the perfecting of appliance for combating evil. The regular hours, steady discipline, abundant occupation, mental and physical, the oversight, more direct and constant than can usually be given at home, are all under judicious management favourable for carrying a boy safely through that most critical period of life when his mind first becomes a battle-ground between what is pure and what is impure.

Even granting a tendency to the concentration of boyish evil in public schools, Thring none the less firmly believed that, on the whole, it is less dangerous to find out that evil exists—easier to gain the power of resisting evil, as a boy among boys, than to confront the sins and temptations of youth for the first time as a young man among men.

His method was one of frank and open treatment.

“One point I would remind you of,” he writes to a friend. “The Bible is God’s great Police Court, as well as His Temple, and till life ceases to be coarse, lessons on coarseness will be needed ; also much of modern reticence is not purity, but lust.”

“At nine,” his diary in one place says, “I had all the communicants in the Upper School to speak to on the subject of lust. . . . I do thank God unfeignedly for the opportunity of putting these great truths before the school, so that none shall fall into that pit of hell unwarned.”

In his address at Carlisle he enters into the question more fully :—

Curiosity, ignorance, and lies form a very hotbed of impurity. We pay heavily for our civilised habits in false shame, and the mystery in which ~~sex~~ . . . is wrapped. I confess that for curiosity I have ~~no~~ remedy to propose. Ignorance and lies are on a different footing. I suppose every one is acquainted with some of the current lies about the impossibility of being pure. The only answer to this is a flat denial from experience. I know it is possible, and, when once attained, easy. The means, under God, in my own case were a letter from my father. A quiet, simple statement of the sinfulness of the sin and a few of the plain texts from St. Paul saved me. . . . A film fell from my eyes at my father's letter. My first statement is that all fathers ought to write such a letter to their sons. It is not difficult if done in a common-sense way. Following out this plan at Uppingham in the morning Bible lessons, I have always spoken as occasion arose with perfect plainness on lust, and its devil-worship, particularly noting its deadly effect on human life, and its early and dishonoured graves. . . . Ignorance is deadly, because perfect ignorance in a boy is impossible. I consider the half-ignorance so deadly, that once a year, at the time of confirmation, I speak openly to the whole school, divided into three different sets. First, I take the confirmees, then the communicants and older boys, then the younger boys, on three following nights after evening prayers. The two first sets I speak very plainly to ; the last I only warn against all indecency in thought, word, or deed, whether alone or with companions. Thus no boy who has been at school a whole year can sin in ignorance. And a boy who despises this warning is justly turned out of the school on conviction.

And again :—

Boys at school, also, should be protected by all their surroundings being framed—so as to shut off temptation. The whole structure and system should act as an unseen friend. There is much virtue, or vice, in a wall. Witness

the one room. No words, no personal influence, no religion even, can do instead of the holy help of the wall, or overcome its evil, if evil. These words involve serious results in practice. They involve the teaching and training of every boy, with adequate machinery for doing it.

The young cannot be dealt with in herds.

The house accommodation should make every boy feel himself cared for. But this is a matter of infinite skill and much expense.

The class working should thoroughly handle each boy, and leave no unswept corners.

Many objects of interest should be there. One boy is caught in one net, another in another.

The whole atmosphere should be an atmosphere of work and life, with time fully occupied, and an involuntary, quiet throwing of light on all the boy life.

If this was the atmosphere of England, much impurity would vanish from schools. Neglect and faulty structure breed impurity as in a hotbed. Talk cannot get over this. Alter the conditions, or be silent.

It is enough for me merely to point out this difficulty. The good wall, within a certain range, is omnipotent.

Finally, he dwelt upon the necessity of school life having joined to it a home life. The purifying influence of good women, and a fuller recognition of woman's work and place in the world he looked upon as that which promised most for lifting mankind into a higher atmosphere of pure life.

After the Congress his diary says:—

*October 7th.*—Back from Carlisle on Saturday, and at last have a few minutes more or less at my own disposal. My paper was very well received. I myself never felt I had been given a message to deliver more than on that occasion. I do not think God's plan of creation by which woman was created as a help in life work has ever been fairly tried, and I have a boundless belief in womanhood and the power of good women for purifying the world. The Vicar of Leeds,

Dr. Gott, has asked me to come and deliver it at Leeds next term.

*October 7th.*—Mr. Jacob tells me that many men thought my paper the best paper at the Congress. This pleases me greatly. I thank God for having given me power to honour women and their work, and to do something to raise them to their proper position of purifiers and raisers of the world.

In a letter written at an earlier period to his friend, Dr. Lionel Beale, who had consulted him as to the best ways of combating the spread of impurity in schools, he speaks of his own experience and methods. This letter Dr. Beale published in a leading medical journal, from which the following passages are taken:—

I was three years at a small private school which, I should have said from later experience, was eminently calculated in its arrangements to foster this evil; I am bound to say I never became aware of anything of the kind. I was nine years at Eton; during those nine years I was well aware from beginning to end of the luxurious unchaste class, but I never knew of the existence of Dr. Pusey's "besetting sin" in the school; what there was of it never came to light, as far as I recollect, and most certainly would have been visited both with punishment and shame amongst the boys themselves—as actually took place in a near approach to it which I do remember. In other words, no boy at Eton in my time was of necessity exposed to temptation and betrayed in this way, at least without full means of escape. I speak thus cautiously from the known difficulty of proving a negative.

Friends of mine since then have told me this was not the case in private schools where they had been, but that the whole set was corrupt in them. This is not unnatural under circumstances of prison discipline, few amusements, small numbers, and the consequent impossibility of escape if one or two bad fellows have power. I have now been upwards of thirteen years headmaster here, perfectly alive to the possible existence of such an evil, and have never seen any reason to suspect its presence. I do not mean that I deny the possi-

bility, nay, the certainty, of individuals occasionally being caught by it. One boy did consult me on the subject, but I deny that it has ever formed a definite temptation here. I have spoken to my medical man, and he unhesitatingly confirms this.

I will now touch on the second part of the subject, viz. what means should, in my opinion, be taken to prevent or cure. First of all, I most unhesitatingly condemn any precautions implying suspicion, and all approaches to individual treatment, unless an individual entirely voluntarily asks for advice.

Next, every father ought at an early period solemnly to warn his children against foul language and thoughts as the most accursed poison, and, when they arrive at the age of puberty, to write a short plain statement to the same effect, putting the deadly sin clearly before them in a few pointed sentences from Scripture, and also the utter destruction that lust too often brings, and the certain loss of happiness. This I believe to be a most important step.

Thirdly, as opportunity arises, which the Scripture lessons always give within a certain time, I always speak in the most decided and plain manner to my class. No boy in the upper classes here can sin from ignorance. I have heard that this plainness has had an excellent effect.

Fourthly, it is idle to suppose that there is any cure for animalism of all kinds unless higher tastes, objects, and occupations engross the mind. Good teaching for each boy, be he clever or stupid, something to interest all, whatever their tastes may be—carpentry, music, languages, athletics, gymnasium, games of all kinds, and a school garden is soon to be added; these are the weapons with which we anticipate sensual evils, and ward off their attacks, and reduce them to a minimum. Nothing has been said of religion, for this simple reason—that religion, if true and able to act, acts through proper means, and moulds all external life in the best way. True religion does not act like a charm on sewage, but forces you to take a spade and drain it. Under proper circumstances purity and chastity are as natural to young men as to young women, equally possible and happy. Proper circumstances mean plenty of occupation, higher objects, a know-

ledge of sin, without dwelling on details, no false exaggeration, but love of good, and exercise of mind and (body) . . . I earnestly deprecate a perpetual pulling up by the roots to see how the plant is growing. Soul-growth, to be true, must be unconscious to a great extent, must be satisfied with honest efforts towards good and honest efforts to hate evil, and not be subjected to prying and dissection. My own conviction is very strong that even when the evil under discussion exists, it is better subdued by these general remedies than by more special applications. Above all, the legislature ought to stop with a strong hand the indecent pseudo-medical publications which deluge the country. The thoughts ought never to be allowed for a moment to rest on foul subjects under any pretext whatever.

The confidence with which Thring speaks of Uppingham's freedom during the earlier years of his headmastership from serious moral evil was no doubt well founded ; at a later period he had to grapple with the difficulty hand to hand. He did so with a strong hand, in some cases of proved guilt punishing with unrelenting severity, yet still depending chiefly upon the openness and frankness of treatment, to which reference has been made. Writing to a parent in 1880 he says :—

The evil of impurity is in English schools, and the numbers and want of discipline and increasing luxury make many unable to cope with it at all. Twice before I have had to battle with it, probing each time to the very end every bit of evidence I got, and following every clue. The second time was less than the first—this less than the second.

For the two last years I have taken to speaking solemn warning to the whole school at confirmation time—having the confirmees in one set, the communicants in another, and the rest of the school in a third. And I plainly put before them the devil work of impurity, and warn them that I will pitilessly turn out any one who after such warning is found guilty. So I am sure that no one who is not a new boy can be ignorant either of the sin or its consequences. Well, I found out four

boys, and required their withdrawal. The sixth form petitioned to have the punishment remitted. I told them I would not stand up before the school to repeat my warning which had not been carried out, unless they would satisfy me and the school that I was justified in doing so. The consequence is, that the whole school to the end virtually have pledged themselves as a body to put down all indecency as a school offence. This is the first time in the history of schools that such a result has been obtained. Put it at its weakest and worst, it enables me to deal with the sin far more securely should it again be detected, and it puts the school in an entirely different position. I am unspeakably grateful for this. It could only occur as the crowning-point of years of self-government and progress amongst the boys.

He attached the utmost importance in moral training to the opportunities furnished by preparation for confirmation.

Wrote to four or five parents about confirmation. There, again, how fatal has been the injury to religion inflicted by the bishops (mainly through their pressure of work and want of time) having promulgated the theory of late confirmations. If a boy of fourteen will not be confirmed, or is not allowed to be, how seldom is there anything to catch hold of, or power of dealing with him.

One more note may be quoted to show the confidence his teaching inspired, even when the seed sown did not take root.

A letter from an old boy asking me in a most despairing way advice and counsel. . . . I have, thank God, certainly been able to speak in a way to bring some health to his mind, and I hope to his body also. But it has been a very great spiritual comfort to me to find my pupils turn to me for help in their dire need, and that this is the impression made on them, little as I am able in this incessant whirl and hunt to see them in ordinary life. Thank God for this sign of His truth-working.

## CHAPTER X

### CORRESPONDENCE

1864-1875

IT will have been seen that in a peculiarly vivid way life presented itself to Thring's mind as a battlefield between good and evil, between right and wrong. This thought was always in his mind as he trained his boys ; he judged them in after-days by the way in which they bore themselves in the fight. The influence which he exercised over them was far from ending with the close of their school career. In great numbers of cases the tie became closer, the influence even more direct and inspiring, as they began to take their part in active life. It was only natural that the university successes of his old pupils should be at once communicated to one who had given them so much of their literary training. It was not so much a matter of course that they should instinctively turn to him when forced to make critical decisions in life ; when hard pressed by religious doubts ; or when, in country parishes, in busy city life, or in foreign lands, the social, moral, and political questions with which they had to deal presented to them perplexities which they could not solve, or made them anxious to arrive at first principles of conduct or

thought. Yet under such circumstances his old boys did constantly turn to him for advice or sympathy, and they never turned in vain.

Reference is frequently made in his diary to correspondence of this kind which must have made no slight addition to his heavy burden of toil. It was a burden gladly borne, for he looked upon the confidence with which his old boys approached him as one of the greatest rewards of his teaching life.

And their confidence had in turn its reward. "Like the blast of a trumpet, breathing strength and courage," Lewis Nettleship writes from Balliol of one of his letters, and what Nettleship felt in Oxford, other workers and thinkers felt in many remote corners of the world.

"The only man on earth to whom, since manhood, I cared to go for advice," writes one old pupil. "He was the one man to whom I practically owed everything, and the one man on whose advice I could rely," says another. The expressions are quoted because they are typical. To have created such a feeling in even a few minds was of itself no insufficient reward for a life's work.

Only a few examples of this correspondence with old pupils can be given. Those have been selected which seem to best illustrate his manner of thought and his methods of dealing with life questions.

Of the first series of these letters, inserted here for the sake of chronological unity, a word must be said. Any one who ever knew Lewis Nettleship intimately must have become aware of the powerful influence which Thring had exerted over his curiously subtle and interesting mind. Nettleship constantly quoted with reverence the opinion of his headmaster; for his reputa-



tion he had the most sensitive regard. Twenty-five years ago, in the Common Room of Balliol College, I happened to remark to a friend that I was about to pay my first visit to Uppingham. Nettleship, then an entire stranger to me, at once crossed the room, introduced himself and asked me to breakfast with him. I found that his sole object was to give me what he considered the necessary clues for understanding Thring's work and character. With the same feeling, ripened and strengthened by the lapse of time, he promised years afterwards to prepare for this biography a study of his headmaster as he had known him in the class-room. His untimely and lamented death upon the Alps prevented the completion of a task which he had undertaken with loyal alacrity.

I can only atone for this irreparable loss by inserting some extracts from the correspondence which passed between the master and his pupil.

From his earliest entrance at the school Nettleship attracted Thring's attention. "This boy will go far," he says in his diary, after reading one of the lad's first bits of composition work. Throughout his school course he watched his development with keen interest. It was the period when the work of construction was going on most actively at Uppingham; when every nerve was being strained to give to the school soundness of character within as well as completeness of external structure. Nettleship left Uppingham in 1865, having in the previous autumn opened his brilliant Oxford career by being first on the list for the Balliol Scholarships. At this point the correspondence opens.

## To R. L. NETTLESHIP.

*November 25th, 1864.*

I congratulate you heartily, and it would be affectation to deny that your success is of great importance to me and the school. But you know my feelings. I look onwards; real work is real work whether defeated or victorious, and the same heart feeling that would have made me welcome you home unsuccessful, prevents me from looking at this as the end of all things, but rather as your true start. I rejoice exceedingly; to me personally it is a very great reward of work. I know you will appreciate what I say, and amidst the general tumult of joy not misunderstand the calmer but perhaps deeper welcome of your true friend. . . .

A short time after the date of this letter Nettleship had to write to him of the death of a brother who had also been at Uppingham, and adds:—

I can scarcely help remembering that the last time I wrote to you was to tell of my success at Oxford. The closeness of the two events brings home to me what you said some little time ago at breakfast about the helplessness of intellect when it comes in contact with great realities, for I have never been at a deathbed before.

## To THE SAME.

*FIRBECK HALL, ROTHERHAM (no date).*

Indeed, your sad news does very much concern Uppingham. I can assure you in many a weary day and painful hour of work, and danger and doubt, the thought that I was not afraid to meet my dead, nay, looked with joy to the time when we should meet again in that happy other world, has been a great comfort and support to me. I am thankful that the same thoughts have come into your own mind. You will not wonder now how deeply I feel, and how anxious I am to try to make others feel in this busy gladiator English life of ours, how utterly unreal the gladiator power is, how entirely

the intellect is an instrument at its best ; how fatal an instrument at its common estimate and self-worship. "The ungodly which is a sword of thine." May it not well be that one of the purposes of your dear brother's death may in God's counsels be just what you have found it—the impressing on you in the hour of your first great worldly victory the glad solemn reality that it is in itself nothing, and that he, dear, good, shy fellow, may have been nobler and better—at all events, that he is taken home to Christ. In the ungodly coming time, if you live and serve Christ through a "life of shocks," this may be a perpetual memory of love and hope, with love keeping your heart pure and simple on dangerous paths—a blessing of blessings, though shrouded to-day—a link never to be broken, for no earthly power can break it, binding you closer and closer as you go on. Believe me, however much I have been tempted sometimes to make our school renowned, and been inclined to repine in time of danger and almost ruin at the slow ripening of hope deferred (*ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἔπαθον*), my own heart within never swerved from the calm conviction that ruin would be better than ungodly honour, and intellect idolatry, and much as I rejoiced in your success (*ἀνθρώπινόν τι πάσχω*), yet I did rejoice more in believing that you felt with me in this than in the success itself, and now over your brother's grave, in the presence of our departed, we can still more deeply realise what is real ; how glorious it is to work for Christ, and yet that whether it is high work (so called), or praise ordained out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, it is all nothing in itself—only valuable as the dedication of all our being to Christ. . . .

#### TO THE SAME.

*September 27th, 1865.*

I send you your medal<sup>1</sup> with great pleasure, also a small book of prayers, to serve as a memorial of my conviction that the only thing worth living for is to serve God, and the truest power on earth prayer. May you find it so too.

<sup>1</sup> A medal given by the Headmaster to Upper boys on leaving the school, "for good work and unblemished character."

## TO THE SAME.

(On winning the Hertford Scholarship)

*February 23rd, 1866.*

I congratulate you heartily. The news came in during afternoon school, so I walked in and just let all the classes out, so a halo of satisfaction settled on the afternoon. Thank you for your kind acknowledgment. It is a reward to me, a very great reward, to see you doing so well, as I know you rate success at its true value, and will, I trust, always continue to work and win, not forgetful of what true glory is.

## TO THE SAME.

(On winning the Ireland Scholarship)

*March 1867.*

Wyndham's telegram is just in with the good news. Perhaps in your own life's work, if it is weary and has been dangerous, you may guess how much I feel the rolling away the reproach from the school of want of power to win. But above all, I rejoice and thank God for having given me two like yourself and S——, who, I trust, will wield true weapons from true hearts "in the wild hours coming on," for His Church and people, as it seems, long after I am gone to rest.

## R. L. NETTLESHIP TO REV. EDWARD THRING.

*January 21st, 1868.*

There are many things about which I should have liked to talk to you. However much I may try to do whatever comes to my hand to do, I cannot help from time to time looking forward to the time when I must probably choose my profession for life. I have always rejected any idea of going to the bar, as I cannot see wherein the highness of such work consists, and I am almost sure my heart would never be thoroughly in it. There remain practically the Church and teaching. The first seems to me the highest of all if only it

were possible. But (you will not mind my speaking what I feel, though it may be wrong) I could not with a free conscience go into the Church as I am now or as I am likely to be for some time to come. To do such work requires a foundation of absolute certainty, and that I do not feel that I have. You used to say that comparatively few people really believed even in a God. On this and certain other fundamental questions I think I may dare to say that I believe—believe, I mean, in the deepest sense. But there are innumerable lesser points which must occur to any man who has to use the Bible and the Church services for other people besides himself, and for other people too sometimes on their deathbeds—points about which, if a man feels only the possibility of doubt, he can only work with half of himself. God knows, it is not pride of intellect that makes me say this. I believe in nothing more strongly than in the necessity at a certain point of belief without proof. But I cannot crush reason and remain a man. I see quite enough at Oxford of doubting for doubting's sake to make me abhor such a thing myself; but the abuse of some must not be allowed to stigmatise all. I cannot help believing myself that there is far more in common between men of different theological opinions than they themselves will allow; that the truth is far wider than any one man or school can comprehend. But until this is more recognised and the Church in some way or other made really Catholic, there must be many who long to go in but are obliged to stay out.

If, however, one cannot do the highest thing, teach in the Church, there is left what (as I have learnt from you to consider it) the next highest thing, to teach outside it, using teaching in its true and widest sense; and I suppose I need not try to look forward to any better end than this. I should like, if possible, to stay up at Oxford for perhaps three years after my degree, and during that time to read for my own improvement, *i.e.* to try to some extent to counteract the effect of reading for the Schools, which must be of necessity superficial and deceptive. I think I could do this without any danger of lying fallow, or even of simply indulging intellectual appetite. However, it is very likely that circumstances may oblige me to try to make money immediately. Anyhow, I think I should look to eventually teaching either at the

university or at a school. Writing, too, is very enticing, though of course not for a long time to come, and on the whole I try to discourage the idea.

I cannot finish this letter, which will, I am afraid, already be getting troublesome to you, without repeating my acknowledgments of what I owe to you. I know that work such as yours carries its own reward with it, and does not want acknowledgment to confirm it, but I will do it if it is only for my own satisfaction. In all troubles and difficulties which I have had (and what they call success does not seem to make life easier, but rather the reverse), the truth which I learnt at Uppingham has been my one great certainty, growing not weaker but stronger. Certainly in many ways it is very bitter to look back at school life and to think what might have been done that was not done; yet, on the whole, I must dare to say—*αἰλινον αἰλινον εἰπὲ τὸ δ’ εὐ νικάτω.*

REV. E. THRING TO R. L. NETTLESHIP.

January 22nd, 1868.

As regards profession, I shall willingly give you a post here if you choose school life, and I believe you would not find anything elsewhere so satisfactory to you, at all events for learning the work. I can well believe the difficulties you feel about taking Holy Orders. . . . I am sure you are not led by intellectual pride. How intellectual pride is possible, excepting between man and man, is to me inconceivable. It is the greatest proof of a God and rebellion against God that the human mind can stand for a moment on a clod in the centre of an universe which existed before it was conscious, and will continue to exist irrespective of its consciousness, and measure itself with infinity of knowledge, and be *proud* of its almost total ignorance even of how the machine works. It needs an evil spirit and his power to account for such a marvel of ignorance. But yet without in the least being led by intellect worship you may very likely not put it in its right place. Indeed, you are sure (for this is the problem of life) not to see the bearings and relations to each other of many momentous questions, and, as I have often said, there is no

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lie like dislocated truth. I should rather vary your statement of being ready to believe at a certain point without proof, and say, "That proof is so solid and broad up to a certain point that we may then trust safely where we are comparatively ignorant," *e.g.* Adam and Eve *knew* that they were in a glorious world, *knew* that they were happy, *knew* if they knew anything that God gave them all this, *knew* therefore that God wished them well and loved them, *therefore* they ought to have been sure that God could not have told them a mean and jealous lie about the tree of knowledge, even though they did not know the reason of the law. This is a type of God's word in the world, and its rejection always. I quite think that there is far more in common between earnest men of all opinions than is generally supposed. Nay, I go so far as to say I heartily love and sympathise with all truly earnest workers, however opposed to my own convictions and however necessary it may be for me to keep out of their way. Phariseism is rampant everywhere; living life is in all parties rare, and without doubt the publican and harlot whose feelings are not seared are nearer the kingdom of heaven than the Pharisee, whatever name he gives himself. Neither can I doubt that in the great elemental mixture of the now opening world it has pleased God to confound and shake Forms, even those forms which enshrine His own divine gifts, to a fearful extent, in order to throw men out of carnal supports on to the life problem within themselves more and more. For even a Sacrament becomes a carnal form when separated from growth and made an end, not a means. The manna misused bred worms and stank. . . .

Believe me, I value intensely both your recognition of my work (life is very weary and desert-like sometimes when health fails and troubles vex), and also your continued communion with me on subjects of the deepest interest to both of us. Believe me, too, that life has been so varied and trying to me both in deed and thought that you will always find sympathy and help if I can give it in any difficulties, however much you may think my opinion likely to differ. I have thought on all these life-subjects for many years and from many points of view, and at least have learnt something of my own ignorance and the love of Christ.

## TO THE SAME.

*May 23rd, 1868.*

My little poem, curiously enough, as it happens to coincide in time with the subject of your questions, was composed quite irrespective of Browning. I did not even know he had written on it, as my edition seems not to have got it in, and I did not know till I had sent it to you that your brother had commented on it. It was suggested, if it can be called so, by Goethe's poem of the *Veilchen*, a pretty translation of which was sung at our last musical evening, and as they sang my heart wandered through the vista of my life dreamland or factland past and to come, and the thought of standing at bay came like a great comfort to me, and seized and haunted me till it pushed out into this ballad, taking that shape partly from the *Veilchen* metre, partly from my having read some German ballads lately. Roland died at Ronces Valles, it is said, betrayed and left in the rear with his detachment after an invasion of Spain. I do not know whether Boabdil was the Moorish king's name, and Count Bertrand is fictitious. I have no books to refer to at present; if the names won't do I shall alter them by and by. As to the lost battle, it seems to me that all true working life is to the worker of the nature of the lost battle: day by day there is such a pouring out of seemingly wasted blood; and success, as it is called, is such a mockery, that the feeling of the lost battle is always at hand the more one succeeds. Men praise the things one does not fight for, and mock the things one does, and their praise does not please, and their sneers do wound. Then all the heights and depths of sin and power against one become more and more visible, while the human motives fall away like scaffolding, alas! from an *unfinished* building, and leave the heart dependent on faith alone, and too faithless to depend faithfully. So weary and wounded, with all the excitement of untried powers gone, and all the elastic physical push going, perpetually finding evil where one hoped for good, personal mortifications which cause extra labour, danger at hand and the clouds closing round the future of the good cause, man trudges on in the glare of a success

which is most enviable to people sitting in the shade, but not unfrequently makes one of the trials. It is crucifixion, and there lies the comfort and the strength; otherwise, but for that, what successful man could stand the bitter knowledge of how little can be done, and the utter ignorance of how much is true and living of that little? So long as the world lasts, Christ's cause in the world seems to those who are growing old—and must seem—the lost battle, with the paradox "in the lost battle *we* have won"; the inward feeling that there is a victory unseen, unknown, the great reward of seeing and loving Christ, however dim the sight and love may be. . . .

After mentioning that his brother John had decided to abandon law and take up painting as a profession, Nettleship writes:—

R. L. NETTLESHIP TO REV. E. THRING.

*March 8th, 1869.*

What I wanted more particularly to tell you is that his change has confirmed me in my idea of going to London eventually. I mean in this way:—Throughout my classical and other work my chief interest has been in the question of ancient and modern art. It was so latterly at school, and has certainly been so up here. I mean by art what you used to teach us to think it—all expression of high thought, whether music, or poetry, or sculpture, or painting. I suppose I am right in saying that the way in which you taught what they call "scholarship" tended distinctly to make one think of the *form* of ancient and modern artistic expression rather than of language as a subject of philological or even (primarily) grammatical interest. Anyhow, it is here, certainly, that my real interest in the Classics has lain. When I talked of going to the bar it was with the idea that London was the place of all others in England where art, ancient and modern, could really be studied. Whatever drawbacks I feel there are in a London life, you certainly are there most near to the best centres of music, painting, and sculpture. My brother of course has always been very strong in urging me to make

this the study of my life, and his own life as an actual artist gives me a fresh impulse. I may speak freely to you without being suspected of conceit. What I feel is that the subject of the relation of ancient and modern art, the true vocation and meaning of art and its place under Christianity, in a word (you will understand what I mean), the "philosophy" of art, is a subject of intense interest and importance, while it is one upon which scarcely any one says a true word. Of course Ruskin has done a great deal, but only in a certain direction. I also feel that my classical training would give me a kind of starting-point, and would help me in trying to get at the truth. Please do not think that I want to write; I do not; but I want to study art, and (I say it in all humility) I think it is what I am best fitted for. I say I think so, because, though I have thought a good deal about it, it is always hard to separate mere fancies from the truth. If I am right, I think now that it would be a false step to go to the bar and try to do the two things at once, having really no true love for the one, except so far as I could make myself love what became a duty. Still I am not clear that it is not better to have something, some common work and duty, which should act as a sort of corrective to the mere life of study. I have said a great deal about myself, and perhaps a great deal of nonsense; but if so, you will tell me.

To R. L. NETTLESHIP.

March 10th, 1869.

I was exceedingly interested by your letter. It seemed to me so strange to hear from your lips for the first time one of my own dreams of a life that might be passed if one had two to live coming out as a thing to be done. I have little means of judging how far this or that in one's work hits or misses, but you have assuredly read it right. Philology I look on as a scientific toy totally unfitted for school training, and unless pursued in a very vast and original way as one of the vanity traps of the day. Grammar and language wielding I do, of course, consider most valuable school work, but it is work, and though I have done much in it (*pace* the *Saturday Review*,

etc.) which another generation will practise, if not acknowledge, nevertheless, as I said, it is work. But I have always striven to make our literary training here a great artistic lesson in the sense you speak of art ; to make it a living thing, to join together the ages, and show how thought in heathen times worshipped form and beautiful shape, and how thought in Christian times worships expression and beautiful life, and to weave together the principles of skilful power at work, so as to show the proper proportions, the true sources, the right use, and enable a right judgment to judge correctly of each. You must come and spend a week or so at Grasmere whether you go to Switzerland or not. We have so much to talk over. . . . You cannot think how you stirred my deeps this morning. . . . It startled me so, hearing from you in that way. I never suspected it, and though I don't quite see how you will carry out your views, that, I am sure, will come if you are to do so. As to writing, ultimately, of course you will ; you won't be able to help it, but wait long and well till you can't help it. In God's work there is no hurry, no, not even when He employs men, and if He blesses you with the seeing heart and eye He will sooner or later bring out the harvest in the best way. A holier and higher subject could not be taken, or one, I believe, more truly a work of Christ. To me every hour of true life has been an opening of fresh doors of interest and truth. And drudgery, and inexpressibly bitter as much of my life as life has been, nevertheless the perpetual feeling of truth and reality widening, deepening, warming, enlightening, has been a more than full reward. May it be so with you. Do nothing, *τὸν μόρον*—that is my great rule—but day by day do the day's demand with your might, and wait on circumstances. Θεῷ δόξα.

There is this note in the diary :—

*March 9th, 1869.*—A strikingly interesting letter from Nettleship this morning about his plan of life, letting out what I had never suspected, his great love for art in the sense of the highest expression of thought in words, painting, sculpture, etc., and his desire to devote himself to searching it out and putting it in a true light, which has never been done. It is

strange ; this is one of my inner dreams. I never thought so much had come out, and he refers to my having, if he read it right, always taught this at school, and that this had been his interest. It is very wonderful. May God bless us both. God grant a true influence may go forth from this place. . . .

R. L. NETTLESHIP TO REV. E. THRING.

*March 23rd, 1869.*

I have been asked to ask you to prolong the Easter holidays to ten days for the Jenkyns. Of course, as far as I am concerned, I see no reason why you should do so, any more than for anything else I have got. Nor do I know precisely on what principle you go in these matters ; much less how far the extension of holidays is bad or good as a bit of school administration. However, as I feel very strongly that any success of mine belongs to you and the school, and especially to you in the present instance, I should be very glad if you thought this a good opportunity of showing it. I will not say much about your last letter, only this, that it came to me like the blast of a trumpet, breathing strength and courage.

TO THE SAME.

*June 7th, 1869.*

I have got a Second. As far as I am concerned it does not matter a straw. But I am very sorry for the school and you. I know it can't do you any real harm, but it would have given a completeness to it all to be able to say that I had got a First. I am speaking the simple truth when I say that to myself and my friends the result is rather laughable than anything else. It is probably due to the fact that I had not got up certain books accurately enough to please the examiners, who, of course, are quite right to be consistent with their own standard. It need not alter, either for better or worse, my own opinion of what I can do. No doubt harder reading might have made a First sure. But I feel that I have got from other sources, rowing even included, much that no mere reading could give. Still, when all is said, I am very sorry on

your account—very ; but I will try to blot out any stain it may leave. . . .

To R. L. NETTLESHIP.

*June 8th, 1869.*

You know very little of me yet if you think I care for your second class. Hang the completeness. I do think that other sources, "rowing even included," have given you better things than a First. Nay, I am very much inclined to think that real enlarged views are against getting a First somewhat at Oxford. At all events, I care mighty little for any special honour. Humble true work, with heart and eyes open, with or without honour, is sure to do what God means it to do. Never think your class raises or depresses you a hair's-breadth with me. And as for what people think, I am not afraid for the school, and you have no reason to feel on that score. We shall be delighted to see you whenever you can come to Grasmere. I shall be delighted to have some talks. . . .

R. L. NETTLESHIP TO REV. E. THRING.

*September 16th, 1869.*

You will like to hear about my travels after I left you in Langdale. I met my friends at Wartdale, and the next day we walked back to Grasmere. I daresay you remember what a lovely day it was, for it was the one on which you went back to Uppingham ; the colours in Langdale were glorious. In the evening we rowed to the other end of the lake, and walked up the hill by the Red Bank ; it was a wonderful sight, the lake perfectly still and dim in the twilight, with the mountains brooding over it. We all went off by the first train on the Friday, Holland and I down to Bettws-y-Coed, where we stayed with Mr. Gifford, an uncle of his, from Saturday to Monday. What a beautiful place it is ! The rivers were in their glory after the rain. It is curious to see how different the water is there and in the lakes ; in Wales it is a rich brown, amber in the sunlight, and really glides over the stones, with a sort of oily lusciousness, so different from the thin glassy water that

hardly seems to touch the pebbles as it passes over them. The woods, too, were splendid, the trees throwing themselves from the rocks over the water in all kinds of forms and attitudes, oaks, birches, and mountain ashes. On the Saturday we had a magnificent walk through Capel Curig by Llyn Idwal and Llyn Ogwen, then to the Devil's kitchen and up the Glyder, and so down again to Capel Curig. From the Glyder we had a view of Snowdon which I shall never forget. It was a day that had cleared up after a misty rain in the morning—a day of lights and shadows. Snowdon stood there straight opposite us like a king, black and craggy and torn ; up from the valley between the clouds came marching in white columns, passing before his face like a veil ; and beyond, shining dimly through the mist, or bright against the sharp mountain line, was the sea blazing under the afternoon sun.

The Glyder itself is most wonderful, an absolute wilderness of stones—the kind of place one fancies Prometheus might have been chained to.

Monday we walked to Dolgelly by Festiniog, between 30 and 40 miles. Again it was a glorious day, and we saw glorious things ; among others, wonderful views of a distant mountain-range, purple in the sunset. But the most wonderful was the sight of the mountains by moonlight, for it was dark long before we reached Dolgelly. The mysterious delicacy of the outlines, when all shape except outline has vanished, and still more the reflection of the outline black in the quivering water along the Dolgelly valley, were things that quite take one's breath away.

From Dolgelly we went across by rail to Ludlow, which is very interesting historically. We stayed at the Feathers, the old inn where I suppose Milton used to appear when he was a young swell. Then from Ludlow we went down to Tintern. The Wye, as a river, disappointed us miserably, it being low tide when we saw it ; but the abbey made more impression on me, I think, than any building I ever saw. It looked as if it had grown out of the ground just as it is, with grass for its pavement and sky for roof and windows, standing gray and ghostly amongst those solemn woods, a real temple of God, lifting up its gables like dumb protesting hands to the world.

From Tintern we went down to Dulverton, on the borders

of Devon and Somerset, where Holland's family were staying. With them I spent ten very happy days, doing (what is a great luxury sometimes) "nothing particular," but drinking in the country and wandering about in the evenings a great deal, when there was always a great solemn harvest moon. When they had to go to South Devon to see some relations, I went to the north coast by myself and walked for three days from Minehead by Lynton, Ilfracombe, and Bideford to Clovelly, and then home. It is a wonderful coast, and I had one long blaze of sunshine the whole way. The gem of the thing, I thought, was about 10 miles each side of Lynton: the path winding along the face of the cliff, at every turn bringing you on a fresh point of view, with vistas of rocky points coming down to the sea, sometimes dark with oak-woods, sometimes purple with heather, and all along the presence of the sea, splashing at your feet, and stretching away in the distance, one great glory of blues and greens.

Altogether it has been a great six weeks for me, and not the least part of it, you will believe, was my ten days at Grasmere. It is a great joy to feel the power of taking in beauty and power of whatever kind, palpably increasing. It is a great joy, too, to be able to talk about "the breadth and length and depth and height," and to get out of the stagnation of conventionalities. To me also it is an intense pleasure to see and take part in a really happy family life, as I have been able to do both in Lincolnshire, at Grasmere, and at Dulverton.

TO R. L. NETTLESHIP.

*September 18th, 1869.*

Your letter came to me like a soft old dream from the ivory gate (wasn't it), or a breeze that brought the breath of far-off forgotten flowers. Every inch of country you describe I have been over till you passed Lynton, and even then I know the kind of thing you saw. I have been several times in North Wales. Some of my happiest days of mere drinking in of delightful life have been spent in the scenes you speak of, and were recalled by your visit to them. From Portishead to Lynton, along the Quantock Hills, I rode with my father and

brother when I was seventeen, a most unforgotten week, galloping into Dulverton over the downs in the rain one evening. I think the change to the different kinds of scenery very valuable to one who can appreciate it and read nature. It is very curious as you observe the different *genius* that is incarnate, if I may say so, in a Welsh river from a Lake river; how entirely the soft rich colour alters the seeming nature of the stream, and makes the very water a different element.

What you say of the power of receiving impressions of beauty and truth is a deep and most significant reality. I believe that one of the most obvious tests to a truth lover that he is really loving truth and not a sham, not a Duessa, is the perpetual growth of capacity. One stands, as it were, on the shore of the great ocean, and dives into abysses of light, and on and on through sphere after sphere of life and its mysteries with a new nature almost, given of receptive, humble, awe-struck perception and feeling in each sphere, till an infinity of deepening power to receive in answer to an infinity of divine glory to be received gradually becomes apparent to the heart; whereas the mere intellect grasp keeps seizing facts and power along the surface in hard horny hands which become harder and hornier, and more incapable of sensitive touch with every fact they seize. Every year has been to me a softening of the impenetrable nature, and a clearing of the eye in all the fields of divine goodness, quite irrespective of the hard, hot, choking work of the external world and its attacks. I feel more and more how all right spirit life is a gladness and a glory increasing; how divine goodness is speaking in all tones that reach the heart with joy or sorrow, awe or ecstasy, everywhere and in all things, if we can but hear it; how completely the spirit within can be in communion with light independent of external circumstances, and yet how external circumstances and creation are the medium through which God speaks. And if it is indeed a speech of God, an ever present incarnation of the divine mind, then the power of reading the divine mind can only exist for those who are in accordance with it, the language must be foreign and unknown to any intellect force as such—to any traveller through the land who is shut out from the only channel of communication with its real life. You cannot think how my feeling for scenery has grown, and

all my existence widened as time passed. I am beginning to feel like a baby might when taken out of doors for the first time. I am very glad you have had so pleasant and so good a time, glad too to hear that you were happy with us. Please look on our home as your home, wherever we are, when it suits you to make it so. . . . As for me, I am back in the furnace again, but, I am thankful to say, stout-hearted and strong, and not, as has too often been the case, straining in weakness and weariness to keep level with the demands of the treadmill wheel which carried me with it pitilessly, though I seemed to move it. . . .

Thrинг had again offered his old pupil a mastership at Uppingham.

R. L. NETTLESHIP TO REV. E. THRING.

*September 16th, 1870.*

I feel the kindness of your offer none the less that I cannot at present accept it. The state of the case is something of this kind : we have just lost two of our ablest teachers at Balliol —Edwin Palmer, through his appointment to the Latin Professorship, and Newman through illness. Besides this, Jowett, who was a tutor, has become master, and so I suppose will not take so much direct part in the teaching. Under these circumstances I could not refuse to engage myself for a time, at all events, to work for a place to which I owe so much, and of which I cannot but be very fond ; and I have accordingly done so. You know without my telling you that I do not forget what I owe to Uppingham, but I hope that I can do my little towards paying the debt as well at Oxford, or in fact anywhere in the world, as there. And the circumstances do seem to me really pressing. Perhaps I realise them more vividly because they are more fresh in my mind than the wants of a school, but it does seem as if Oxford just now were in terrible need of earnest, large-hearted work, and that there are very few men who will give it to her. And there is this special interest about Balliol, that while I believe it teaches its men in a more really Christian spirit than any college, yet owing to the very small clerical element in it now and the unorthodoxy of

many of its fellows, it has got a sort of cloudy rumour of infidelity about it, as indeed Oxford generally has in a great measure. Now it is important at the present time, when religious and secular, and Christian and atheistic, and other like words are being bandied about in the wildest and most ignorant way, to try to show at one college at least that men can be brought under high intellectual influences without necessarily lowering their spiritual beings, and that the teaching of philosophy, so far from estranging from God, has for its aim and aspirations the bringing us near to Him.

I hope what I say does not sound presumptuous. All talk about one work being "higher" than another seems to me very nearly nonsense ; and if circumstances led me as straight to school as they do to college work, I should find in the former heights as great, perhaps greater. But having been brought face to face, so to say, with some of the great difficulties of Oxford life, and having felt, and still feeling, them so intensely myself, I do not think there is any other call at present strong enough to prevent my trying what I can to face them with God's help, seeing that I have fallen into the position which naturally requires me so to do.

I have tried to think honestly about these things, and I do not think I am deceiving myself. If you think I am, or see any vital mistake in what I have said, please tell me. Otherwise I must decide for myself, and this is my decision. . . .

Few things are more disgusting at the moment than grinding along a whole day over a pass on a sick stomach, feeding on weak brandy and water. Yet gradually "the outward man perisheth"—the stomach fades away—and there remain unimagined glories of snowy plain or towering peaks, or garden-like valleys, tinged with the sense of pleasant fatigue. We saw a great variety : first a real Swiss rural country, with sweet-scented pine woods, and rushing brooks and cloud-swept wolds, overlooked by bare gray mountains, with here and there a snowy peak, a land of châlets and goats and cheese, and peasants ugly and hard-worked, but hospitable and courteous. (What a wonderful charm there is about real rustic courtesy, and how seldom one gets it in the English classes.) Then Chamounix—a week of blazing sunshine, in which Mont

Blanc stood as if cut out of ethereal marble against an azure sky, and flushed from white to gold and from gold to rose every evening. And then Mürren, from which, for a fortnight of rain and cloud and sunshine, we saw the great Bernese range right opposite—so close you thought you could almost jump across to them—gleaming through gauzy veils, or ghostly pale under heavy brooding clouds, or bursting like great angels through rifts in the rolling darkness. It is a most strangely unearthly thing—that apparition of a peak or far-off snowfield through the breaks in the clouds. . . .

To R. L. NETTLESHIP.

*September 21st, 1870.*

I think you quite right in your decision. No lesson has been more deeply impressed on my mind in life than never to do anything *τηρεῖ μόρον*, in the expressive Greek phrase, for there is such a thing, but to accept implicitly the obvious fitness of circumstances as a guide, and take in the simple Catechism words, “the station of life to which it shall (*sic*) please God to call me,” as clearly marked out by the main occurrences of His world. Whatever debt you owe to me you pay in the best and truest way by doing good true work in that station, and I do not think either of us need bestow a thought on our affection and esteem, beyond seeing in it the perfect security that there can be no chance of any misunderstanding on the subject, and finding from this perfect liberty to follow right in an unbiassed way. Certainly there is no higher or lower work in God’s kingdom; the deepest, purest love must be the sole highest, and who knows what shows or produces this best? But yet this does give a standard, just the one we have both thought of, the doing honestly the daily work when and where He appoints it. And I quite consider you have a secure call in the circumstances you have told me. . . .

R. L. NETTLESHIP TO REV. E. THRING.

*May 12th, 1872.*

Thank you very much for your sermon, which brings with it quite a breath of old times. . . . I cannot help seeing that

there are many points in which I have broken away from what I know you hold to be truth ; . . . and yet, on the other hand, when I read your sermon, it seems such a miserable mockery to talk about difference of opinion, when the spirit which lies at the root of that comes home to me with the absolute force of conviction. . . . I suppose it will be made clear some time ; and one must be content to feel one's heart beat true at times to the old simple war-cries. God fulfils Himself in many ways, and if, as it seems to me, the spirit which you stirred in me has grown into something which you could not acknowledge as your own, I can only say that what is vital in it is still the same and will always be so, however different the forms in which it appears. . . .

Thring had little in common with the school of thinkers among whom Nettleship was chiefly thrown at Oxford, and the new influences around the latter gradually made their lines of thought drift apart. The separation was an equal pain to both. Still Nettleship continued to the last to look upon his old headmaster as his spiritual father in most of the fundamental questions of life. After his own death it was learned that for some time it had been his habit to read each Sunday to the invalid mother to whom he was so devoted some of Thring's lately published school sermons. Who that ever knew the two men—the one so strenuous in his faith, the other so sincere and unaffected in his uncertainty—will doubt that their differences of belief or opinion have been “made clear” in the wider sunlight of another life ?

Nothing moved Thring more than seeing any one of his old pupils giving himself up to strenuous and unselfish work. And certainly he had something of the Napoleonic eye for recognising soldierly effort, the Napoleonic art of saying the word which rendered courage higher and devotion more complete, which

made each man feel that on him depended in no small degree the fortune of the day. Short, crisp letters, almost like the bulletins of a general upon a campaign, were going out constantly from his study to cheer men engaged in trying work. Sometimes it was to a missionary abroad, sometimes to one at home. Wherever an Uppingham boy went to a post of difficulty the headmaster's eye followed him.

A series of letters written to a clergyman who had taken work in a neglected colliery district will illustrate the spirit in which this kind of connection was kept up with his pupils.

TO REV. HARRY MITCHELL.

*November 16th, 1881.*

I lose no time in sending you working drawings of a Fives-court. Wishing you heartily success, and fully believing that the most religious work of our day is the finding good amusements for the people, believe me, etc.

TO THE SAME.

*March 16th, 1882.*

I have been too busy to write to you before in answer to your very interesting letter; because it was so interesting to me, that the sort of brutal telegram note in return would not in any way have satisfied me. You cannot tell how much I value your confidence, and how it goes to my heart, and cheers and nerves me for work to think that your feelings for me allow you to write "as to your mother." I never valued a sentence more than I do that one of yours. You are indeed a big headmaster. Do you know that I learnt my most valued lessons in teaching as a teacher in National Schools when I was a curate? So you see I am only returning to the fountain-head that which I drew from it when work of mine, as you tell me, helps you. I send some notes on teaching, as you touch on the subject, which may be of some service to you. I drew them up for myself and the masters. They are, how-

ever, being published in the *Educational Journal*. I did not intend that sort of thing. But I got into a kind of explanation affair with the Journal, and they behaved well, and on their asking leave to print it, I consented. . . .

I am so glad you do something special for the children. What a frightful mistake the Church Services have generally been for them, and the way they have been treated in Church.

I often think of the Bristol cutler, Plum. My brother was in his shop talking to him, and a boy came in to buy a knife. Plum left my brother (who was rather a swell) and paid extraordinary attention to suiting the boy with a knife to his mind. When he had finished, my brother remarked on the pains he had taken. "Why, you see, sir," he said, "that knife's a great matter to a boy; if I give him a *good one*, he'll remember it as long as he lives, and always come to me again." A fine and true philosophy—*always give the children a good one*. Alas! how often, how universally forgotten.

I have something to show you on these lines when you come here again—our schoolroom beautifully painted under Mr. Rossiter. This will kill the mean idea of lessons. Surround lessons with noble surroundings and the whole boy world will alter. So I am following Plum.

Our Aviary is getting on capitally, and is a great pleasure to me, and again to the school. The school has just acquired Mr. Bell's house and property, and will shortly have Pateman's. Then the whole hill from the schoolhouse to the end of the lower school will be in school hands. This will make the position very complete. I little thought to see so much come to pass externally.

#### TO THE SAME.

(On his objecting to address the school about his work.)

March 18th, 1882.

Never mind lack of speech. Don't worship talk, worship life. Remember the greatest leader the world ever had, God's chosen leader of His people, Moses, was no speaker. Talk is destroying England.

The next letter requires a word of explanation.

X

For the second edition of his *Theory and Practice of Teaching*, Thring received fifty pounds. He at once forwarded the money to his old pupil in the collieries, to be made use of in his parish work. Mr. Mitchell returned the cheque, and in a letter deprecating so large a gift of hardly earned money spoke of himself as merely a "big baby." Thring replied:—

*May 13th, 1884.*

I look on myself as a kind of big baby. Are we not all big babies, if we are anything—babies in our Father's care, just doing baby work; doing it well, if we do it as babies, humbly, trustfully, without self-will; doing it ill, if we are thinking it our own, or going our own ways?

I just feel that every word of that book was a gift. The experience was a revelation given me in work; the writing it was just a forth-speaking of God's gift of speech. I never felt anything more utterly not myself; myself only, as having a heart empty enough to be filled, cleansed enough not to foul the inpoured treasure. Believe me, the effort to work with the Holy Spirit is all. The powers we have are nothing—talents, which God gives or takes away, without altering the real man, the man, whose heart decides the use made of them, whose love determines the value of his work. So, dear fellow-worker in the vineyard, take the money, and be cheered; not we, but what we are made by the Lord becomes a power. Any cloud is the same till the glory fills it with light. I cannot see that a giant, who does half work or grudging work, is better than the child who does all he can. Still more, I do see that the child who sows God's seed is nobler and greater in the working world than the incarnate cannon who is a world-famous destroyer.

You want the money to help your people to the light. Use it as you please.

TO THE SAME.

*September 26th, 1884.*

What a fellow you are!—like Harry Percy who came in to breakfast daily, and met his wife's good morning and question,

"How many hast thou killed to-day?" with "Some fourteen or so—a trifle, a trifle," an hour after, you stick up schools in the most casual manner. I quite begin to expect to see the *Wigan Examiner* on my breakfast table with the bread and butter.

But I do rejoice in your vigour and success. And I rejoice heartily in your onslaught in word as well as deed on Mr. Mundella and State frauds *re* the nation, and sneaking communism. I cannot understand why I and you and other hard-working men and women should be made to pay to support our neighbours' illegitimate children, illegitimate beer, or any other illegitimates, which is what the School Board under-selling the Voluntaries, or starting better schools, comes to.

This is scarcely the worst; the tyranny which, as if we had got to perfection, is going to force all the minds of the country, all the teachers and all the taught, into the same cursed Chinese shoe, and kill all progress, is more fatal still, and worst of all, the practice which separates brain work from religion and morality, and calls it education, is simply the devil let loose. Altogether a more iniquitous fraud on the national conscience and purse cannot be imagined. It is heart-breaking. But I am delighted to see one of my men making head successfully against such abomination. I have never been so downhearted in my life about England as now. The nation seems given over to a lying spirit. "The prophets prophesy falsely (modern science to wit), the priests bear rule by their means (our Radical Government), and my people love to have it so, alas!"

To think that we should betray all who trusted us in Africa, in Afghanistan, in Egypt, shed blood in torrents when a firm word at first would have been enough, bribe crime in Ireland, and that all the betrayal, bloodshed, and bribery should only lead to ruin. Best remembrances to you and Mrs. Mitchell. I am proud of you.

TO THE SAME.

October 29th, 1885.

Your packet this morning gave unmitigated satisfaction; the family appreciate a joke, and your "free education" will irradiate the day. I have not stopped laughing over it yet. It puts my dictum of "a devil's parody" into visible shape.

Cannot you send it to a Conservative management to be published and distributed far and wide under the title of "Free Education Box"?

No, I shall never ask for anything. God put me here, and He will take me away. If I was Bishop I should have to wait till I got a parish big enough and nasty enough for you. . . .

My dear fellow, I don't overrate you. I have lived and worked long enough to know that he who does what God gives him to do with the most complete emptying of self is God's man. And when I see a man doing what God sets him to do well, I know the first half of the problem of life, and a bit of the second. I owned to being greatly cheered by my American success. The good cause will live; it wants a hearing, and now I know it will get it.

I send you two copies of "The Charter of Life." I feel very strongly about the views given me to put in it; you can have more if you want them. . . .

#### TO THE SAME.

March 25th, 1886.

I am delighted with your *début* as an agitator. Seriously, I heartily sympathise with and congratulate you. Of all the evils that the wicked men and liars who at the present moment bear rule over us are bringing on England, the worst is *slavery*. This appalling curse, all the worse when it takes the garb of an angel of light, which is daily more and more thrusting its dead, unfeeling hand of external power into the heart fibre of living work, I dread above all other modern devils, and their name is legion. I hold that the evils and miseries of wrong-doing are God's ministers by which men are brought to cure *themselves*, and that the man who meddles with them *by law* (unless in the case of crime) is first a fool, and secondly a fighter against God. If men would but recognise that misery comes from vice and cannot be removed by law, they would not be such fools. The Israelites, no doubt, could have been brought out of Egypt by a great battle, but *Cui bono?* They would only have changed from sensual slaves to sensual tyrants. God passed a good many coercion bills, and executed

a pretty stiff number of rebels in the wilderness. I loathe the meddling. We shall be destroyed as a nation if it goes on. So you see I am fully in accord with your action. We must work with all our souls and strength to make people a law to themselves, and if they won't be, let them suffer the consequences till they will. This is God's way of working. For 1400 years Christianity thought it could interfere with the laws of labour and capital, and a pretty mess they made of it with their alms and gifts. And now a kind of Antichrist is trying the same dodge, and a pretty mess, as was likely, *liberté, égalité*, and *fraternité*—that is, living on your neighbour—has made in France, and will make in England. God forbid that we should be fed with Government pap when we squall, *à la* Gladstone.

*N.B.*—Squall loud.

TO THE SAME

*December 2nd, 1886.*

I congratulate you heartily, though it must be very hard for you to leave Pemberton. I am going now to blow the other trumpet in opposition to my last blast.

I am sure that the best work requires to be tested by absence and new direction. Death does it in time if promotion doesn't.

I am sure that clergymen make a great mistake for their people's sake if they do not, if possible, take a sufficient holiday every year to let their people feel how far the better life has become their own. And from this point of view I can well believe that your removal from Pemberton may be a benefit not only to you but to Pemberton, as throwing them on their own resources after a good foundation laid for them to go on with. I am an intense believer in life and the living power of true life; if a plant does not live of its own vitality, depend upon it the soil is in fault, not the plant, if the plant is hardy. Oats grow, but they grow slowly. . . .

TO THE SAME

*June 15th, 1887.*

I congratulate you on the success of your operations on behalf of the Pit Brow women. I have been going in lately

for women's work, and had the annual conference of the leading headmistresses at Uppingham last week. It was intensely interesting. They were so different from the popular idea of the learned, or the woman's right, type of thing; such lady-like, nice, quiet, superior people, we all felt it a pleasure and honour to entertain them, and to them it was an official recognition of much importance. I gave them an address at their request, and we had a conversazione and some school songs in the great schoolroom on the Friday evening.

The following letters were written to an old pupil who had consulted him on certain social questions of the day.

In such questions Thring's interest was profound. But though a reformer by instinct and in practice, he yet deeply distrusted many popular methods of social reform, because he believed that they violated fundamental principles of human conduct which could not be neglected with impunity.

To T. E. POWELL.

December 6th, 1883.

I am exceedingly interested in all these sanitary movements and fervent hopes of improving the lower strata of society, and exceedingly alarmed at the later phase of legislation, which may be curtly summarised as "bread and treacle to the babies that squall loudest."

In my opinion we have no *Government*, we only have an executive, tools of the *popularis aura*, waves that are strong only through the movement behind them of tumultuous weakness in bulky motion.

I have one strong political principle: an intense belief in liberty, the other side of which is, an intense dread of mean authority, and an intense contempt for all people, cries, and creeds which, in whatever shape, restrain and enslave true work, impose conditions on the skilled and thrifty workman, and demand that people should do for others what they ought to do for themselves. Help as much as you like, but never give

all. Help as much as you like, but never turn a free man's free agency into a tax he is forced to pay, and the non-workers can claim by law. I cannot see why I should be forced by law to support by law my neighbour's illegitimate children, or Government encourage him theoretically to cut my throat if I don't. This is really at the root of the whole matter; and I agree with Miss Octavia Hill in looking on Government confiscation of the property of the workers to support the non-workers, by whatever name you like to call it, as the greatest curse that can befall this or any nation. However complicated the problem becomes, and God knows how complicated it has become, the original start is plain enough, and nothing will ever be cured by running your head against the laws of nature.

It is a law of nature that man should work, and be sober, and temperate, or else starve, he and his.

It is against a law of nature to tax the sober worker to pay his drunken neighbour's bill, or maintain him in lust.

His drunken and dissolute neighbour runs up a long bill against laws of nature, and then, encouraged by *no governments*, proceeds to cut his neighbour's throat because he has a credit at the bank of nature and nature's God. I do not mean for a moment to say that the rich are good and the poor bad, but I do mean to say that as a class the men who maintain themselves by work are good, and as a class the men who cannot maintain themselves by work are bad. In both cases I take into account their immediate ancestors.

Law can and ought to remove impediments. Christian men and women can and ought to help the poor to set things going which they are too weak to set going, but they can no more rightly take away from the poor the necessity of keeping going the thing when started than they can eat his dinner for him. It makes me laugh to hear men talk gravely of doing away with landlords, etc. Some one must be owner, and if he is not a slave, must have the power of getting work done for him.

Farewell liberty, if we are to have much more of the doing for people what they ought to do for themselves. The modern cry of *panem et circenses* has been raised. Our-top-of-the-wave men are listening to it. It means down with the workers, make them slaves; up with the non-working rabble, make them

masters ; and cruel masters they have always been, unbelievers in anything higher than themselves, devout worshippers of the lash for others, as it is the only thing they understand.

There, I have given you some morning lessons under the great disadvantage, however, of not being able to qualify and explain as I go along.

I am a Radical Conservative—that is, I want quietly to change everything that is, but to change them slowly and on the old principles, reforming everything. I must shut up. The bell has sounded.

TO THE SAME.

*December 29th, 1883.*

As regards your letter, the whole question is summed up by what you state at the beginning, “a fair chance for all *who will work*,” with the addition, “as far as external power can give it.” But a fair chance only means that hindrances should be removed, not that one penny of other people’s work should be given. Not one penny given to relieve man, woman, or child from doing what they can do ; or from the responsibility of proper forethought, proper self-denial, proper work. The true socialist starts from the broad fact that all I can gain by my work is mine, as against any other single man or clique. The advantages which gave me the power to work successfully were given me by workers directly or indirectly. They are mine as against any other individual men. The State has a right to take taxes from me in order to protect, or work the State. Every such tax, every tax that is not robbery, is either an insurance payment for security and against loss, or it is a commercial payment to the great national partnership for facilities to carry on business. But the moment the State takes my money, that is, my work, to give it to you, under any pretext whatever, it is a robber, and that State sooner or later will pay the robber’s penalty. The State has no more right to take one man’s property and give it to another than the pickpocket has.

One thing is certain, like the case of the poachers. Whatever difference of opinion there may be about *ferae naturae* and their rightful owner, one thing is certain, *ferae naturae* live on

land or water, and a man who has neither land nor water cannot be the owner. So in property, however complicated the problem gets to be, property means stored-up work, and stored-up work means the brain-power and life-power as represented by intelligent management and hand work put into it. Those who have put neither into it cannot have any right to property.

I am quite aware of the logical statement that the community has a right to determine on what terms the individual shall live in it.

It is logical enough, but logical insanity, as is often the case in words applied to life. In the first place, there is no such entity as the community ; for all practical purposes you might as well say the Abracadabra has the right, etc. Secondly, if by this is meant that whether we like it or not, all we earn is to be put in a common stock and divided out, who is to divide it ? And who is going to work ? You cannot break laws of nature which have made the work and powers of men vary in value.

That is what I mean when I ask why should I maintain my neighbour's illegitimate child. I mean by illegitimate every child brought into the world who demands more than his parents can give him, or to whom Government makes a present of my money. The School Boards are promising to be an excellent example of public robbery. But no community of robbers can exist long. I quite admit that, morality and the Christian duty to help apart, the illegitimate children may be very dangerous. Jack Cade taken up by a popular government is a very important person, but for all that the quart pot will not hold a gallon, let him or Gladstone affirm it ever so much, and I for my part do not see if one drunken bully is not fit to govern me, why ten thousand drunkards are more fit, or ten thousand uneducated fools. The great problem always is, how to let the wiser minority govern and at the same time satisfy the foolish majority ; or how to let the practical difficulties of the foolish majority influence sufficiently the selfish, self-satisfied want of experience of the educated minority. But who is aiming at this ? Not our rulers.

The upshot of the practical question is simple, very simple. First, many people are in the world who have no right to be in

the world—the fruit of the sin, self-indulgence, and improvidence of their parents, who have broken the laws of nature.

Second, a fair chance does not mean robbing people by law to support these people, but guarding against their helpless condition being made a prey by the stronger.

This is all that Government can do. Government does not mend the original breaking of nature's laws by breaking others. God meant misery to follow on indulgence without self-restraint in high and low. Is the peer dying at seven-and twenty, used up, less punished by natural laws than the poor man in the slums? On the other hand, the rich and the educated sin grievously in not personally seeing their poorer brethren, working amongst them, helping them to make a start, or get over a difficulty; but never doing for them what they ought to do themselves. . . . You can no more do the work of raising a man *for him* than you can eat his dinner for him. He must do all he can, and he has a fair chance given him if he is on the lowest step, if he is given a fair chance of living a decent life. If he lives a decent life, then his children will have a fair chance of rising another step, and men do rise and fall incessantly on this principle. Meantime, don't meddle with the question of large families. The question is the right of marrying. . . .

My school was an embodiment of the principle that there is no true life without true body; or, in other words, that true externals must be provided for life—by others, if the life is too weak to effect it all itself—by the life itself, if it is strong. But I did not rob other people to do this. I poured out my own heart blood and my own earnings like water. I think the Christian man is bound to do his own work in the most living way, and if his own work is mechanical, to have some living work to supplement it, however slightly.

There, I think, the infinite love of Christ comes in to make the individual say in a wise way, "All mine is thine," instead of pandering to the robber cry, "All thine is mine." I have given fortune and life, but I was not robbed of it. There is the distinction. Government spends other people's money, and has no right to spend it excepting for their good. An individual spends his own and has a right to spend it, even if he is a fool in the way he does spend it.

## To THE SAME.

February 2nd, 1884.

Your problem about bygone wrongs theoretically presents no difficulty for two reasons. The first is that every generation, according to its lights, rewards the work that is valuable in that generation. You cannot separate the generation into two sections of right-doers and wrong-doers, still less can you subdivide those two sections into the right-doing or oppressed poor on the one side and the wrong-doing oppressors on the other. Grant, for argument's sake, the class oppressor. What is it made up of? What does it represent? It represents the dominant belief of the time, and is made up of the great majority of the people. Take the *bête noir* of modern wisdom, feudalism. Feudalism represents the fact that in a time of great violence and personal insecurity fighting was the most valuable work, and mutual aid in fighting the main business in life. In its better form it took the shape of fighting for law, order, and self-protection. The methods of law, order, and self-protection were rude and rough enough, but the intent and principle was this. In its worst form it took the form of combinations of robbers for the sake of booty. In either case, fine fighting qualities were exceedingly valuable, and the work of best fighters was rewarded accordingly, and the poor and lower orders—the majority—were as heartily *ex animo* devoted to this work as the nobles who led them. In fact, in the rougher form of it, nothing in the world has ever been more democratic. There never has been a time when personal merit (bravery) had better scope for winning a way to fortune than in the feudal times. But at all events, the nobles were nobles because they were supported heartily either as protectors or robber chiefs by the people, who shared in and supported their work. In modern times, the acquisition of wealth by trade, or other arts of peace, is the road to distinction, and the most valuable work is rewarded by wealth. Whether that wealth arises from an Arkwright inventing a new machine which brings prosperity to millions, or from a manufacturer cornering the market at Birmingham, makes no difference. The fact remains the same, that the people work willingly to support the main

objects of modern life, and if the people did not work, either from the profit it brings them, as most do, or because of their dire needs as the victims of unthrift do, there would be no rewards of work. It is all humbug talking of "they toil not, neither do they spin," or lies. It is all humbug or lies talking of the few preying on the many. There are endless complications, no doubt, and much that is wrong, but the laws of work and property are laws of nature, and violent readjustments of conditions of society are wicked and silly, and violent denunciations of past conditions are wicked, silly, and ignorant to boot. You cannot confiscate either past or present labour with impunity. Make the labourers better men, and the misery ceases. Laws cannot mend sins. Private men can strive in their sphere to do it. Secondly, it is astonishing how short a time and in how few instances individual anomalies last in a country like this. There is a Lancashire proverb which puts in a graphic way the shifting character of wealth apart from merit: "There are only three generations between clod and clod." There is an incessant dropping out of the unworthy from their place of vantage, and an incessant rising of the worthy into their place. In a couple of hundred years this is very demonstrable. As to marriage, if a marriage is entered upon sensibly, I still think with the Psalmist, "Blessed are those that have their quiver full." The evil there too is in the unthrift and self-indulgence before marriage, and in rushing into certain misery, as many do.

There is plenty for good men to do in bettering the world, but only one way of doing it, making people better, helping living with them; not being liberal with other people's money, and turning the weak, self-indulgent, and idle into beggars. This applies at once to the question of education. The principle of supporting your neighbour's illegitimate child corporeally or mentally is the same. I never would break through a law of nature to give relief temporarily. If it is dangerous, try and put it in the way of getting itself out of danger. But non-religious schools bear witness to the problem not being met in a right way. I am clear on the functions of Government. Government ought to take in hand strongly every question which affects the community as a community, and compel public works to be carried out or carry them out.

But Government has no business to take my money and give it to a cause which does not bring me any personal benefit, especially if I believe that cause to be wrong. All sanitary matters, all removal of hindrances to work, belong to Government. To see that the nation is educated also, I think, belongs to Government. But I cannot think it belongs to Government to prescribe *how*, or to destroy by public money private effort, and to impose the will of 2,000,000 people on 1,999,000 because of that small margin of majority.

TO THE SAME.

*March 25th (1884?).*

. . . I do mean what you suppose me to mean. It is an entirely false view of facts at all times, and in all instances, if a broad period of time is taken, to imagine that in any homogeneous nation there is any divided interest, or that class means to tyrannise over class with the intent of wronging them, but universal, *μοχθηπλία*. I mean the inseparable evil of human nature makes large bodies of men difficult to deal with, and produces through evil great and real problems, which can only be reached by curing evil, not by moving the pieces on the chessboard. For example, at the present moment how the lower strata are clamouring against the self-indulgence of the wealthy. Well, be it so; but who thinks that for one man who openly destroys by self-indulgence his family or himself in the upper classes, a thousand do it in the lower, on fair average of the respective numbers? Will this evil be mended by putting a thousand drunken brutes in power where now we have one only? I trow not. Or to go back: What can be more silly in reviewing the past than the throwing aside the times and circumstances of which life was composed? The first need of man is protection, and the earlier stages of civilisation consist in combinations for protection, where the best fighter deservedly gets the best pay; this soon passes into the much more difficult problem of how to rule the conquered. Then Christianity by ennobling work has gradually thrust out war as the one road to success, but has introduced all the complex problems of wages, wealth acquired by stored-up work, *i.e.* capital, the different value of different kinds of work,

and all the perplexity of intricate crowded modern competition knotted into tangles by our old friend *μοχθηρία*. Apparently the newest modern lights darken a darkness that is incredible, only it is here. No one seems to have any more statesmanlike knowledge or remedy than our dear friend Aristophanes, a passage from whom, versifying Mr. George, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Mundella in different degrees, I send you as the best summary of the political wisdom which would tax the worker to support his neighbour's illegitimate child, and give by law to the sturdy beggar what he must by nature's law get for himself, or sooner or later perish. Billeting the strong pauper on the rich only makes him more of a pauper still. The heathen world spent its whole time on the theory that you must first conquer, and when you are conqueror, do nothing but live on your conquered neighbours. The advanced spirits of the modern world are endeavouring to do the same, only they wish to put the ignorant and idle pauper on the neck of the intelligent richer worker. But the pauper theory is the same in both cases. No shifting of the pieces will alter the great fact that there are no opposing classes anywhere, excepting so far as *μοχθηρία* prevails. Work and rewards of work from the beginning of the world to the end are the basis of kingdoms. A rich non-worker or a pauper are in the same box; they are funguses—funguses which, if neglected, destroy the tree. The French Revolution was an example of the rich fungus destroying the kingdom. Our state is in danger of the poor fungus doing it. Miss Octavia Hill put a great truth into a most simple axiom the other day when she said that "it was far easier to supply the poor with proper dwellings than to teach them to dwell properly in them." There is the whole difficulty. The bad rich want to rob the poor, the bad poor want to rob the rich, and proceed to legalise forms of robbery. The great law is: Help—*never give*. And be careful how you help. No help is help which does not help towards self-help. Every generation is in reality struggling with the same problem, viz. how to minimise *μοχθηρία*, and develop unity of work. Or rather, that is the real problem which is being struggled with; but sometimes nations for hundreds of years do little but play at conquerors and conquered, a very bloody and disastrous game, whether played by Mr. George and his

paupers, or by a French Emperor and his paupers ; poor or rich, the *μοχθηρία* of self-indulgence is not cured by indulging it ; and in life problems no man can do for the life of another what that other's life ought to do for itself. God's eternal law has made each man's life a unity capable of being *linked on* to another's, but not capable of ceasing to be a link, with all its own weight to bear. In a living growing people every part is living growth, and the moment you take any man's duty off him you turn him into a fungus. There are many problems, many adjustments which each generation has to settle, but no antagonism, no oppressor and oppressed, till you confiscate by *law* the earnings of one set of men and give them to another. All difficulties arising from the free play of work competition, freedom of contract, etc., are difficulties which mostly arise from *μοχθηρία*, which law cannot alter unless law has made them, as is sometimes the case.

A few letters written to a son will serve to show his views on life questions where his most intimate private feelings were deeply concerned.

To G. HERBERT THRING.

*November 28th, 1879.*

I write on your birthday, and you will get it on mine. Many happy returns of it to you. May you work and live so that every year as it brings your birthday round may bring round with it the feeling of life richer, better, purer, and more unselfish.

You may believe how much I feel Alington's death, but I feel far more his living power. If you want to be a soldier, be Christ's soldier ; gather the hardy—far more hardy—laurels of manly, quiet, ceaseless work, and your birthday shall be to you happy, and the day of your departure the truest birthday of all. Work hard, enjoy your working life, and as you work, what you are to do will become plain. Have a strong present life for good, and you will have a plain future life. God bless you, my boy.

## TO THE SAME.

*February 20th, 1880.*

I should wish you every day and night to read from ten to thirty verses of the Gospels carefully, and so go through them quietly and begin again. Life will interpret them as you go on living, and they will throw light on life.

## TO THE SAME.

*November 27th, 1880.*

My earnest prayers for you day and night are that you may bear yourself in God's world as one full of God's life—loving work, true and faithful ever. So shall every succeeding year be to you, as it has been to me, more full of blessing, and every care and sorrow turned into a greater power of life and hope.

## TO THE SAME.

*April 21st, 1883.*

Let me put down a few things which I wish to stick by you in life. Read carefully a portion of the Gospels every day. Believe me, the one great feeling of my life has been, and is, the blessing that seeing and feeling the truth of Christ's life, and the way in which life works in the world, and in one's own heart, and the happiness of overcoming lower and baser nature, has brought.

Remember the one great maxim of working life, that though there are thousands able to do work, there are very few who can be depended upon to do it exactly as their employers wish. Men, in fact, whose employers feel that when they have put a thing into their hands, they can have it off their minds—it will be certainly done.

Look earnestly at the work how that can best be done, *not* how *you* can do it. Never despise work; complete mastery of little things makes a great man at last. Black shoes if a proper authority tells you to do so. Do all the work you can; volunteer for it if there is any such chance willingness and capacity never fail to get on. Extra work willingly done is very gratifying to a superior. It is often possible in times to

be so useful as to get nearly indispensable to superiors. Never expect gratitude, or make a claim for willing service, or grumble. The more work, the more experience. Many a man has succeeded because he has been really put on; many a man has failed because he thought he was being put on when he was not.

*Never forget a kindness done to you in low estate.* You cannot repay it if it was unselfishly done, but you can feel it, and have the greatness of heart to silently do your best. Love truth. Truth is doing your best. A man who does not do his best defrauds somebody of something; he defrauds his employer, himself, and God. The two last always, the first very often.

All work is religious. Your religion will be shown by doing your work unselfishly and well for Christ's sake. May God bless you. This day with its two letters is a solemn day to me and to you.

The following letters were written to an old pupil who had just been asked by Dr. Bickersteth—then Bishop-elect of Japan—to accompany him to his distant mission, a call which was, after some hesitation, accepted:—

To REV. L. B. CHOLMONDELEY.

March 1st, 1886.

Mrs. Christian has spoken to me of your possibilities and the anxious thought it naturally causes. I will willingly do what I can to help you, but as I cannot know all the circumstances, anything I say must be taken with the reservation that I only supply some data for you to form your judgment by. The first thing I will say is the emphatic statement, that *no one but yourself can decide*. This is a law. We take our main steps in life alone, as much as we die alone. There are responsibilities which no man ought to evade for himself, and no man can righteously take for another. This is one which you now have before you.

As regards the question itself. I think it is a call; yet not

so obviously, not so brought about by numerous little circumstances as far as I know, as to make it an absolute binding necessity. Again, this last statement of mine is one which your own heart alone can rightly have a real opinion about. You are in my opinion extremely well fitted for the sort of post you are asked to take. The country is very highly civilised, and requires a really educated man.

Your father and home have in my judgment a fair claim to your earnest consideration of their wishes. More than that they probably do not want. Putting them out of the question for a moment, for argument's sake, my own verdict would send you, and bid you God-speed. But I must repeat solemnly and emphatically that it would be wrong in me to judge, under the circumstances in which I am placed, of imperfect knowledge and no direct authority.

You will have my hearty approval if you decide on going. You will have my full concurrence in the goodness of your action if you do not.

With every prayer that you may do the best, believe me,  
your sincere friend.

#### TO THE SAME.

*November 2nd, 1886.*

I shall not cloud the question by words or argument, which are not my concern. I feel exceedingly clear on the main principles, and have no difficulty in stating them. First of all, you must judge for yourself, no one can take the responsibility of your choice from you, or ought to try to do so to any great extent.

Secondly, no one can tell beforehand fitness or unfitness, excepting in very marked cases; relatives and friends least of all. It was His mother and His brethren who said He is beside Himself, and came to stop Him.

Thirdly, the ultimate question is, whether the summons is a call or not. This greatly turns on circumstances known only to yourself, and the Authority that gives the call.

Fourthly, if it is a call it may not amount to a call to that special thing, but be a message rather than a call.

Fifthly, the acceptance or refusal of a real call may, if the motives are good, be very evenly balanced, and either choice be good.

Sixthly, you, and you only, are any judge of the real voice to you, you only know how it fits in with your secret life, you only know how far you find yourself, the call, and the work in harmony.

You and you only have to weigh these things, as if there was no other judgment in the world but your own. There is no other. All other things are data for your consideration, nothing more.

Lastly, whatever you decide on, leave the result to itself. You only have to decide to the best of your power rightly, after that what comes of it is no business of yours. God gives success, God gives failure, and both are right to him who gets either. And may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, guide you aright.

Thring's method of giving advice, not by dealing with the circumstances of the special case presented to him, but by reference to general principles of conduct, is well shown by the following letter. It was written to a friend who held an educational position of importance, but who had been asked to give it up and undertake an entirely different and difficult work, for which he was supposed to have special qualifications.

I write a hurried line, as time presses, on the call you have received. . . . I do not presume to advise, still less to use any persuasion, yet I think the thoughts of one who has thought much over such life questions may be of value as data to help your own judgment.

Such calls, though occasionally no doubt neutral, present themselves to my mind as either temptations or *calls*. If they are side winds coming in from outside and drawing a man off his life work from motives of vanity or *chance* of gain dangled as a bait, they require careful scrutiny, and probably are temptations, presenting glitter and possibilities in the place of solid, sober, everyday work.

On the other hand, if they are calls to powerful work, especially if a competent authority makes the call, and they grow out of the working life by a natural growth, and carry it on in a higher but not less real sphere, then they seem to me Providence opening the door and giving the command to move. I well understand your feeling. . . . But as far as I do apply my principles, it all the more makes me think the call a call from God. Since all great things are done out of the deeps of hearts that feel, and have had self-love and personal ambition killed. It may be that before you could do the great work in the true way, you had, like Moses, to be overthrown, and sent into the wilderness to commune with the shepherd thoughts of an humbled heart. At least I know all I care for has come out of the sorrows, and all such power as I have has been changed and transfigured by defeat and pain. In fact, your sorrows make me think it is your call. Yet do not mistake me ; I offer no judgment. "No man can deliver his brother" is true in these things also. I only throw out some thoughts for you to toss about, and sift, if perchance they may in any way be of service to you.

TO THE REV. E. F. MILLER.

[ST. THOMAS'S COLLEGE, COLOMBO.]

*March 24th, 1881.*

I am exceedingly glad to see from the newspaper duly received last week that you not only have won much praise, but appear to have somewhat weathered the great financial difficulty that threatened to overwhelm you. In these days a headmaster's office is one of incessant strain and trial. It belongs to our struggling selfish times that it should be. It is the fashion, in England at all events, to look upon all workers who hold any office as slaves of the mob, and to kick and cuff them accordingly. This makes work very gritty and difficult, and if I was a soldier I should find it hard to stand it. But in school work there is so much which the public can neither give nor take away, that in spite of all its trials it is full of life and blessing ; and when by chance the public appears to be

laudatory too, as seems to be your present case, an unexpected help comes.

You cannot think how much your telling me that my letter gave you courage reacted and gave me courage too. Sometimes I feel quite overwhelmed by work and worry, and the great issues and the small means and the obstructions. But somehow or other, time after time in the strangest way, the rocks open up and the paths go through, and *injussu imperatoris de loco meo non discedam* brightens up into fresher work out of a mere dogged resolution not to sink. As for trustees, when have trustees ever been otherwise than weights on life? So take — as the necessary thorn in the flesh. The school here is going on very well, . . . I feel very hopeful of the inner growth, and have a sort of faint dream that the idea I began with towards setting a new teaching power on foot may yet be realised, so far as sowing a seed goes at all events.

To REV. A. H. BOUCHER.

*November 28th, 1885.*

As regards politics, I think a clergyman's duty is clear not in any way to identify himself with a party in his parish. I do not mean that he is not at full liberty to talk politics in private; but, wherever he is present as a clergyman, and would not be present if he was not a clergyman, he ought to keep his tongue clear. At the same time, the great principle of right and wrong, the facts of history, the true statement of what he believes, I quite think he both may and ought to put out, leaving it to his hearers to judge which party most truly comes up to that ideal. I think you, for instance, quite at liberty to preach on Church Defence, if you attacked no one, and occupied yourself in building up truth. . . .

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Thring's more casual judgments of men and things, scattered here and there through his letters or notes, as he hurriedly dashed off the thought of the moment, are often singularly epigrammatic and picturesque. A

few illustrations are added here as giving additional insight into his methods of thought and views of life.

. . . People who are squeezable when they ought to be firm, will, I fear, be firm when they ought to be squeezable. That is the law of incompetency.

. . . In many ways a most superior man and most zealous for good, and always at work, but an unhappy trick of somewhat hairsplitting, and considering a good sentence as powerful as a good fact will always somewhat impair his power. A man who once loses the single eye, or does not get it, which pounces on the thing to be done in spite of irrelevant pros and cons, however specious, never gets rid of the flaw, I think.

. . . If I call myself anything I call myself a Radical Conservative, as all my heart is for change, and all my heart and head for a change that shall not pull down but gradually build up—for growth, that is.

. . . His weak points are fear and flattery. . . . Be sure of this, he is not going to face a public row in opposition to the school power, and I am not at all convinced that we might not win him over quietly. He *loves* the winning side, and *smells* it afar off.

Lord Iddesleigh, though I have not seen him, I believe, since Eton days, was familiar to me not only from his public life, but he and my cousin Lord Hobhouse married sisters, and I knew their brothers well also. "He was a very perfect gentle knight"; too gentle for these fierce days—not from his noble rejection of abuse, but from not stating hard truths hard enough in dealing with hard men.

. . . He is a specimen of that most perfect type of man, a first-rate English clergyman, and it was pleasant meeting him.

. . . Magistrates' justice is an ill look-out unless you prosecute a poacher, and then you will get justice and the poacher more than justice.

The best way of resting is to work as hard as we can, because by working hard we get the strength to make hard work easy. The curse of the fall was weariness in work, for Adam had work before the shaping and keeping of the garden. The Sabbath was for rest from natural weariness.

Many an injustice is triumphant because the champion of justice has not fought well. Before you engage the navvy who is thrashing his wife, you must be sure he will not thrash you amidst the applause of the spectators, who love a fight and don't care for wives and justice.

He is like a wet cloak that will wrinkle in any direction it is flung.

Once turn your back on light, and ever after, wherever you go, you move in a moving shadow of self. . . .

A little leak sinks a ship, a raft that is all leaks floats ; in proportion to excellence compromise is impossible. Never compromise, stop short, leave alone, but don't spoil. . . .

Greatness is great, you cannot make yourself great. . . .

Argument is like an air-cushion ; the clever manipulator has only to give a little more or less pressure to the windbag, and it takes what shape he pleases. . . .

Moderno learn as taskwork and keep drawers in their mind for knowledge instead of drinking it all into themselves, making it part of their lives, thinking of it, being it. . . .

Many men, like dead thorns, have no life in them, but much scratching. . . .

When culture is enthroned in the throne of life and takes the place of life that made it, the Vandal and the Goth must be let in with their axes and hammers ; it is too beautiful ever to be cast out ; it must perish to give life free play again. . . .

Christianity is an incarnation of a new truth always, thus the life of Christianity depends on the life of Christians.

The stream makes music as it ripples over its hindrances ; the pebbles bring out its music.

. . . But few men are aware in early life, if ever, how scarce an article a man who will quietly do what he is wanted to do is, and how common an article a man is, who can do a great deal that he is not wanted to do, and who does not do anything satisfactorily.

Truth is giving your best always, never cheating God or man or yourself of time or work due. That is truth. . . .

## CHAPTER XI

### THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

1875

WE have seen how, through more than twenty years of patient, unflinching endeavour, Edward Thring had striven to realise in actual outward fact the conception of what a great public school ought to be as he had outlined it in the days of his earlier teaching enthusiasm. During these years the equipment of boarding-houses, chapel, schoolroom, hospital, and workshops ; of gardens, cricket fields, fives courts, and gymnasium, with many other minor appliances, had grown up around him, and into these the school fitted somewhat as the living organism fits into the curves and convolutions of a delicately complicated shell—the one so adapted to the other that the outer structure seems essential to the inner life.

With the limits of numbers which he had fixed long since reached and easily maintained, Uppingham seemed to have gained a secure place in public regard. Passages in his diary at this time show that even his exacting judgment was beginning to be satisfied ; that in structure and working power the school seemed to him something near what he had so long toiled for, and about which he had dreamed. But from any

pleasing feeling of content or security there was to be a rough awakening. The structure had been planned with the object of nourishing strong and true life; now the strength and truth of the life developed were to be tested by rude separation from the structure. He had held that the "Almighty wall" was everything in moulding the moral and intellectual life of a school. He was now to prove that important as structure was it was nothing to the inhabiting spirit; that it is not walls which make or secure a city, but the men who dwell within them; that though machinery must be relied on to give efficiency to the ordinary routine of work, there may come extraordinary moments when life asserts its power to perform all the functions of the highest existence and exertion without the aid, or even in defiance, of machinery. Thring used to say that to train a man to the highest capacity for teaching, and then put him into an unequipped and unfurnished schoolroom, was like preparing a person to be the captain of a great ocean steamship, and expect him, with a canal boat or lighter, to bring his goods and passengers with speed and safety to the other side of the Atlantic. As an ordinary working rule this view is true, and cannot be too strictly insisted upon, yet we know that the genius and courage of the old navigators enabled them to accomplish very great things with very poor ships, and Thring was to prove that he at least could violate his own theory with splendid results. He was to become known as the "mobilising Head Master."

Until 1875 Uppingham had been fairly fortunate in escaping what must always be the schoolmaster's most serious risk in grouping numbers of boys together —infectious or epidemic illness.

An elevated situation gave the place a naturally bracing and healthy atmosphere ; what were apparently sufficient precautions had been taken in house-building to secure sanitation ; a hospital had been built at large expense to provide for the isolation of infectious cases ; and for twenty-two years the arrangements had proved sufficient, with vigilant care, to ward off serious danger. But the school had been built up in a remote and unprogressive country town, whose tax-payers dreaded the heavy expenses of the sanitary engineer. The system of town drainage was very imperfect ; the water-supply inadequate ; in many cases when building schoolhouses cesspools had to supply the place of sewers ; later it was found that connection with the town system of drainage was the most dangerous of all, since the sewers were unflushed. Long immunity had begotten carelessness among the townspeople, and even among the masters themselves, and the place was ripe for a disaster—a disaster which from the circumstances of the case could not but fall with crushing weight upon the school.

In earlier years slight outbreaks of scarlet or typhoid fever had occurred in the town at intervals, sufficient to make the masters anxious, and leading them to bring what pressure they could upon those responsible for the sanitary condition of the town. During the early part of 1875 there are several suggestive entries in the diary.

*February 5th.*—Much illness in the town—scarlet fever. This is anxious work. I fear we shall not escape. Most certainly in former days this perpetual fear of epidemics was not on schools as it now is. . . .

*February 7th.*—There is much scarlet fever in the town. This does not lighten matters. . . .

*February 8th.*—We have sent in a memorial to the Guardians requesting them to have the water analysed with a view to getting a proper supply for the town.

*February 9th.*—I saw the sanitary inspector this morning, and hope to get a step forward. The masters all signed the memorial to the Guardians on the subject.

*February 13th.*—Scarlet fever very bad in the town, which makes it anxious work. We can scarcely hope to escape, but yet I will hope. God can keep us free. In spite of this and all the scheme worry, etc., I feel so full of life and spirits that I hardly know myself. God has given me back some of the old elastic work power. I can do ten times as much as I have been able to do for years, and I feel cheery in proportion. . . .

*February 28th.*—Received an anonymous letter yesterday denouncing the filthy state of the town, and in a half-sneering, half-real way telling me to look to it, as no one else would. But I don't see how it can be done. The law helps us very little, and like most weak laws is a better instrument of oppression than of help. The Rector is more jealous of power, though unwilling to do anything, than any one I ever met, and . . . the other local authority is equally jealous of power, and represents the cheap business view. I fear nothing can be done, busy too as we are, and not united, and not rich. Altogether it is a bad job.

The Guardians seem to have taken no action on the memorial of the masters, and, lulled by the freedom of the school from illness during the winter and spring terms, the masters themselves did not realise the imminence of the danger. Not till the school was again at work after the summer holiday did the blow fall. On what Thring afterwards speaks of as "that fatal fourth of October," he makes this note in his diary:—

Two or three cases of low fever in the school. This begins to make me anxious.

The anxiety soon deepens.

*October 6th.*—A complete change of weather, which I hope

may sweep away the strange wave of low fever that has swept over us. It is cold and fine and bracing now.

*October 7th.*—Much care. Two of the boys at Woodfield very ill, one dangerously so; little Nash. Then we have two mothers and a father down here; very natural, but at the same time not likely to mend matters, as the sick boys are not kept so quiet as they should be. . . . All this presses heavily and makes one nervous about one's own children too, for that is one of the penalties of being a schoolmaster, that one's own family is so much more exposed to any epidemic than under ordinary circumstances. However, this will pass as other things have passed, and God is God.

*October 8th.*—The cloud still heavy, though there is now some hope, but little David, Mullins, and Nash are all in a very critical state, and Hastings at the Lower School. . . . Altogether it is very trying. The bell tolled this morning, and I was in great fear, but a man had died in the Union. I very much fear we shall not quite escape death, but no new cases have fallen.

*October 10th (Sunday).*—A trying day, though the rest from work and the chapel is always a blessing. . . . This is a heavy time. How soon the sky can be overclouded. “Thou didst turn Thy face from me and I was troubled.” It is hard to prosper and not be a fool; harder still perhaps to *feel* that trouble works blessing, however much one may know it is so. I do know it, but I am like a naughty child sometimes in feeling. Just as if other people were not tried, or any good could come without training, or I myself had not been blessed again and again by these merciful lessons.

Panic had now begun among a section of the parents; some were telegraphing that their children should be sent home; others advising that the school should be broken up; while the majority awaited with apparently complete trust the judgment of the masters upon the situation. How to deal with the natural fears of the more timid parents, how to act justly by the fearless, how to prevent the panic from extending

to the boys, were, as they always will be in such cases, anxious questions. At first Thring's feelings were all for presenting a firm front to the danger. To many parents, he reasoned, the return of their children was a grave inconvenience and expense; the appliances for combating disease had proved sufficient in the past, and would probably prove so now; to break up the school involved the risk of spreading infection far and wide through the country; it was poor training in manliness to permit boys to run away at the first hint of peril. He spoke vigorously to the boys about what he called "this cowardly panic," pointing out that the greater safety lay in courage. The report was that he described as "deserters" those who asked their parents to remove them. The statement is probably true, and is certainly characteristic. Its wisdom will be judged differently by minds of differing temper. Thring had the soldier spirit himself, and would fain give it to his boys. Meanwhile, he and his colleagues were beginning to realise that they were dealing with something more than an ordinary or temporary outbreak, and took every means to discover the source of the danger.

In a letter to the medical officer of the district, Thring says:—

It is very important to us to correct any evil if it exists, and to be above suspicion if it does not. I should be greatly obliged if you could come over without delay, and test and examine the drain system of all these houses and their water-supply, as well as the schoolhouses generally, and anything likely to be of use in putting things on the best footing. If you cannot come yourself, perhaps you would kindly telegraph to me, as it is no use to us to have the inspection of any man whose name will not carry respect and conviction, not only in this immediate neighbourhood, but also in other parts of

England amongst the parents of the boys, in the great towns especially. . . .

The diary proceeds :—

*October 12th.*—At my lowest point to-day. I trust now refreshed. This morning a long letter from Dr. Grimsdale at Liverpool, speaking in the name of many parents in a kind spirit, but also in an imperious one. Then I had scarcely finished breakfast when two mothers came in to get an arrangement made at Woodfield (the hospital); then the masters' meeting; then in school an interview with Bell about Woodfield arrangements. To Fairfield, saw Cobb, saw Mrs. Grigg, met Christian coming back, who said Nash was supposed to be dying. Mullins had already told me there was no hope of his little boy; wrote part of another letter, went to dinner, lay down, but was sent for by poor Mullins. I found him quite perplexed about his house, overdone both in body and mind, expecting his little boy to die every minute. I did what I could, decided his questions for him, and had a little sympathetic talk. Then I came away and went out with Gracie for an hour. On my return I knelt down and prayed more thoroughly—more from the bottom of my heart than perhaps I ever remember. I felt moved to pray for little Mullins and the school, and I got up from my knees with a perfect feeling of answered prayer, and of my prayer being granted. I believe the little boy will be spared us and this plague cease, but I know that God is working and has made Himself felt in my heart, and is with us, and that all will be well. So I feel since then another man. . . . Yet I have such a feeling of God being near that the whole of this great trial is for the present changed, and I pray to be kept strong in spirit through what is yet to come. Amen.

9.50.—My class gone. A message is in that little David is much better, little Cecil Mullins a decided improvement, and Nash not hopeless. God has heard me and comforted me exceedingly. But indeed, alive or dead, I had in my soul that feeling of being able to pray straight up to God, and of being answered that nothing could shake. I feel that God heard and granted my prayer.

*October 13th.*—A weary day of telegrams, letters, parents, and masters. Little Nash very ill still. . . . At four saw our sanitary inspector. Was not a little amused to hear from him that he had known nothing of any fever in the town till to-day at the Board. So I may be excused for having known nothing. . . .

I am most thankful, too, that as yet none have died, and I trust God has given me their lives. . . .

*October 14th.*—This led me to make a short statement to the masters on my principles in these matters. That under no conceivable circumstances should I break up the school; that it was a great injustice and wrong to many forcing them to have their boys home; that, in the first instance, when a house was at all got hold of by illness, I should have parents written to to be told the fact, but strongly dissuade the removal of the boys; then if it spread I should make the removal optional, and if it got very bad should throw the responsibility of keeping them here on the parents. That we should always stay so long as there were any boys here to teach and keep them. I said we were not in a big barrack with one common establishment, but each with his own house and separate arrangements, which renders it quite unnecessary to break up the school. I also told them I should not permit the school to be overhauled by any but a competent and true authority. . . .

*October 15th.*—God has taken little Cecil Mullins. I misinterpreted somewhat His will, but not the gracious answer to my prayer in the spirit He gave me. And the revival even for a time shows me God's will more clearly, and was a great boon both to me and, I think, his father, who was worn out and overwrought. . . . Haviland is here, and there was a sanitary meeting, and Barnard Smith has given instructions that the very fullest investigation is to take place into the town and school-houses' drainage, water, etc. That is good. . . . Eighty telegrams came in and out yesterday, and as many to-day.

*October 16th.*—After dinner at 3 P.M. I attended little Cecil's funeral. At 4 P.M. went to hear Haviland's private report to us. He had not much to say, but he pronounced that "it was quite safe for the school to go on." . . .

I confess that my blood rather boiled when I heard this man deliver an *ex cathedra* judgment, as if all he had said was gospel on a question where there was so much to be considered. But such is English ignorance. It was very nearly gospel to us, and had he decided otherwise, I don't know what I could have done. It was strange, too, to hear . . . fussing about the lies that had been told and following them up. I have learnt to think that about the surest test whether a fellow past thirty is a fool or not is whether he vapours about truth, and expects always that a case must be cleared by jaw, and wants to clear lies, and cannot sit quiet under a little painting, but talks big of justice and of following up the impalpable.

*October 17th.*—Little Richardson at Hodgkinson's died to-day. . . . The other patient is going on fairly well. . . . I walked out with Skrine after chapel, and on the Stockerton Road, when we were about a mile out, heard the bell toll. How it did go to one's heart, but it was for an old woman in the town. . . . I hope we have seen the worst. But I will try not to faint and be faithless. Good will come as it always has done. Good must come when all we long for is good, since "All things work together for good to them who love God."

*October 18th.*—Hodgkinson came in to me. He, poor fellow, bears up wonderfully. He told me there was on Saturday a sort of small indignation meeting of parents at the "Falcon." On a friendly parent of one of the boys going into the room, he was saluted with the question, "Whether he was come to take his boy out of the hands of these murderers?" Nice for poor old Hodgkinson, whose whole life has been bound up in the house and boys; nice for me too, for I am murderer No. 1. Encouraging, but let that pass.

I have sent up two stone jars of water to be analysed by Savory and Moore on my private account—one from Fairfield, one from our well here, and shall probably send another sample to-morrow.

*October 21st.*—I went out of second school early because Haviland was here, and have inspected the whole house and drains with him, and am now master of it. I am glad to say there is little to be altered, and that not of much consequence.

He also passed both my wells officially as perfectly pure. That is very good; we shall see what Savory and Moore say. . . .

*October 23rd.*—I can hardly help laughing, harassed as I am, when I think what a downfall my china jar of vanity has had these last three weeks. I thought I had done something, and that Liverpool thought so too, and lo! Liverpool and no small portion of my world have set upon me these last three weeks, as if I had brought their children into danger by my proceedings and possessed neither sense nor honesty. It is a comical upset. Alas! there is little laughing here. . . . Got a letter from Mr. Birley to-day. He and Mr. Jacob think my statement too dictatorial. They, however, imagined it was meant as a circular. I have written to Mr. Birley to say that, as a private document, I do not feel inclined to abate its tone of authority, as recent legislation, while it has strengthened the headmaster within the school, has broken down the school authority outside, and I do not mean to play the part of servant to the public and bow to the *Times*. I was able to send Mr. Birley a letter from a man of business in Liverpool who said he thought it admirable. . . .

How utterly I feel the baseless character of my old dreams that true work would live here because the foundation was true. I now see it was only a worshipping of nets in a subtle form. Nothing will live unless the presence of God makes it. Even now I see how full of weakness and corruption and death the place is; how a breath would upset the life in the place; how easily in a year or two these walls might be turned into something—Oh! how different from what I meant them; how utterly the outer world takes the mean trade view of them; how greatly the inner world does too.

A statement to parents of the principles by which he would be guided in dealing with the outbreak had become necessary, and it is worth giving in full.

The question has been raised as to what ought to be done when illness breaks out in the school.

The answer in our case is simple.

The school consists of eleven different boarding-houses;

each complete in itself, and in the majority of cases standing by itself.

The school is not a barrack, in which all live together under the same conditions, using the same diet, and intermingled always.

Therefore, it is not my intention under any conceivable circumstances of illness to break up the school by a public act.

It is a great injustice and wrong to many parents to send their boys home with the possibility of introducing illness into the family.

If the disorder is infectious, it is not right to scatter possible bearers of infection all over the kingdom.

It is not right to put parents to the inconvenience of their children being sent home when they ought to be at school, or to saddle them with this additional expense.

It is not good to teach the young to run away from illness. It is likely to make them far more susceptible to infection, and liable to catch disease in after-life, as fear is no slight cause of ill-health.

On the other hand, due account must be taken of the parents' views with regard to their children.

These considerations lead directly to the following conclusions :—

*First*, When illness makes its appearance in only one or two cases, and is not spreading, the discipline and good of the school require that no boy should be allowed to leave the school.

*Second*, If the illness threatens to be somewhat more troublesome, and does not remain stationary, then parents should be dissuaded from removing their boys, unless in special instances, but be allowed to do so.

*Third*, If the illness seems to have fastened on a particular house, the parents of all boys in that house must be written to, and the option given them of taking their sons home.

*Fourth*, If the illness is really serious in any house, the parents leaving their boys in that house must do it on their own responsibility, though we shall always be ready to keep them.

These four gradations mark the course of treatment that

will be pursued in this school. We shall not in any instance leave our posts. As long as any boys remain to be taught, we shall remain to take care of them.

But, indeed, scattered as we are in so many different houses, each a centre in itself, nothing is likely to occur to overthrow the experience I have now had in the worst years of epidemics.

It is, however, true that a large school is exceptionally liable to infection, from the fact that upwards of 300 boys come into it from all parts of the world, and often from unhealthy districts. But this is our misfortune. The healthy discipline and conditions of a good school are very favourable to general health.

As a point of school order, I would mention that no boy will be permitted to go home, unless the case is very special, on the bare receipt of a telegram by us. We must first be sure on what grounds the telegram is sent, and I shall not give permission unless satisfied on this point.

These general principles, and the rules arising from them, which I have stated, will, I hope, be sufficient for all ordinary cases.

*Sunday, 24th.*—I feel myself again to-night for the first time. I preached a sermon on gospel character this afternoon, which has done me great good, if it has done no one else. God put a new spirit into my heart, and the baseness of all this panic and turmoil and implied views of sickness and death has come into me, as if scales had fallen from my eyes. I pray God my heart may keep strong. “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Amen.

*October 28th.*—This morning brought the analysis of water from London, flatly condemnatory of the well pronounced by the sanitary authority perfectly pure. This, together with the refusal to give any information about what ought to be done, convinced me that these proceedings are useless to us and noxious, and that London authorities must be called in; so, after all, as so many boys are gone, and all nearly will go under these circumstances, I shall be obliged to break up the school. I have conferred with Mr. Birley and Jacob and they agree. So to-morrow after the meeting I shall have the notice printed. Alas!

*October 29th.*—A most bitter disappointment. The trustees, with all this great school handed over to them, have simply refused to get a sanitary engineer down to set the school right, and have appointed a sub-committee to urge the sanitary authorities here (whom we mistrust and despise), and to see about appointing the day of reopening the school. In other words, they have grasped at all meddling power and officious grinding us down, and shirked doing anything whatever. . . .

*November 1st.*—The last evening, alas! of our maimed school-time. It is strange, though, the childish relief I feel at not having to get up for school to-morrow. A true and real relief, however, is the lifting off that fearful weight of the possibility of fresh fever. . . .

*November 2nd.*—At 9.45 a full masters' meeting. Two important things which are noteworthy were brought out strongly. In answer to a question from Rowe I was enabled to declare emphatically before every master and with no dissentient voice raised, "That no master in a society like ours was an individual; that however attacked as a master he had no right to send any letter or document to the newspapers without consulting me; that it was positively illegal to do so, and not to be permitted for a moment." The second was that I was able once more before all of them, Hodgkinson included, to state decisively that whilst there was liberty of judgment so long as Bell did not pronounce on an illness, which might either be dealt with by the individual master, or he might come to me; that there was no liberty of judgment the moment the doctor had decided a boy to be really ill, but that it was law admitting of no choice that the parent must be told at once. . . .

*November 3rd.*—Wrote to Jacob and Birley, but could give them no information excepting that we were going to be condemned by the Sanitary Committee and made a scapegoat of. And sure enough they have been and done it. I got to-night such a document, the most wonderful bit of Jack-in-officism I ever knew. Considering the Sanitary Board and town generally have steadily resisted all improvement as far as possible these twenty years, and jobbed everything they were obliged to do, and in this very instance have ignored fever in the

town for the last six months, they have had the audacity to attach serious blame to our houses for having had fever; no reasons given, no hearing of the case. It is astonishing. . . .

*November 4th.*—It is a curious turn of the wheel which has made the criminals judges, and set the men who have systematically opposed improvement, and in this very instance fatally neglected their duty about the fever, to pass sentence on us. It is noteworthy in these enlightened days. . . .

*November 5th.*—A remarkable day, and my courage has quite risen, and I feel cheery once more. This morning brought me the petition to the Central Board of Health from Mr. Jacob, and I convened a meeting of masters at twelve, and proceeded to write it out. Skrine helped me. When the *Times* came in we found a most venomous notice of Uppingham in the paper, evidently from headquarters here. . . .

Meeting of masters at twelve. . . . I had the *Times*' notice read, and observed it was just as well to face the facts at once. We must either have an inquiry and be absolved by the central authority, or we might go. Ruin or not was the simple question before us, and I for one meant to try and win. . . . So we have on this day at the same moment received the greatest proof of the venomous feeling in some quarters against us, and been able to throw the die boldly for victory. . . .

I said I had made up my mind that I never would appeal to the newspapers or acknowledge them as a tribunal; that I was the servant of the public, but held office where God had placed me, and should not render account to the newspapers. . . .

I wrote to Henry to put in a word for me if possible. At all events we have now done our best, and are fairly pitted against these tyrants and their falsehoods. This cheers me. The attack in the *Times*, too, rouses one. It is far easier than the moving about, as it were, in prisoned air, powerless to resist and unable even to see one's enemy. This is better far.

The following is the petition in which Thring and his masters challenged the closest inquiry on the part

of the central authority in London into the condition of school and town :—

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE G. SCLATER BOOTH,  
*President to the Local Government Board.*

*November 5th, 1875.*

SIR—Owing to an outbreak of enteric fever in some of the schoolhouses and in the town, and also in consideration of the unsatisfactory state of the water-supplies, the trustees of the school determined at the last meeting to break it up—and the boys have all been sent home.

We are large ratepayers and responsible for the health of upwards of 600 persons, and we approve this action, although it is to us in a pecuniary point of view of most serious import. We are prepared to do everything required of us to contribute to sanitary improvement, but we should like to feel assured that our outlay will not be valueless—that the main sewer of the town was large enough and deep enough, and that it was not necessary, as discovered by the Local Board in July last, to close a further number of wells.

The trustees of the school have invoked the assistance of the local sanitary authorities ; looking, however, to the excitement caused amongst the parents of boys, it has been intimated to us very decidedly that confidence can only be restored by the central authorities ordering a strict and searching inquiry into the causes which have led to this outbreak, and by their applying a remedy.

We would therefore pray you to send down two of the most experienced medical and engineering inspectors of the Board to make a searching inquiry, and at the same time to give directions as to what they consider necessary to be done to our schoolhouses, as well as, by the Local Board of the district, to the town. We enclose a communication made to us by the trustees we elected to represent us on the Trust, and we have the honour to subscribe ourselves, etc.

## TO SIR HENRY THRING.

November 5th, 1875.

If you can get to Sclater Booth and the Central Board, it is simply *all in all to me*.

My case lies in a nutshell. You know well I have given everything to trying to make schools better and improve boy life. Most of our arrangements here are very good, and if it rested with us the few things wanting could be set in order without difficulty. But it does not rest with us. *The town is in fault.*

During all these years at intervals we have been trying to get improvements set on foot, and these efforts have been resisted and resented bitterly by those who are now supreme authorities over us. Unless we can get the central authority turned on, it is pretty well ruin for a time, for my time, that is, to the school. The Local Board from its former tactics *cannot* act with vigour enough, and if it could do so, the row and panic amongst our parents is so great, that it would not help us much after the lies and exaggerations that have been set going, unless we are able to state that the highest authority has overhauled and settled everything. I enclose a copy of our petition signed by every master present, and sent up in pursuance of the directions given us by our two trustees.

The town is trying to make the school its scapegoat, for the double purpose of hiding past mismanagement and preventing present outlay and exposure. This is the whole matter. It would not signify to me at all that they were hostile if they acted. They might fill the newspapers with fictions if they drained the town properly. But their present show of movement cannot be trusted; all we are sure of is that we shall get the worst they can give us. We are having water-works set on foot at last—that is, one of my own (old) boys is starting a company, not the town. We have friends in the town, but at present they are squashed; as Lord A. Churchill said of Oxford, “Uppingham may forget but cannot forgive,” that it exists mainly by the school. All we want is a thorough overhauling and impartial justice. They may abuse and lie as much as they like, or condemn us justly, in their

opinion, only don't let us be sacrificed through the shortcomings of our local Dogberries. You government men have no conception of local tyranny.

To REV. GODFREY THRING.

*November 11th.*—The plot thickens. No official notice, however, of our appeal as yet. . . . The papers still full of me. I marvel how little I care for it. But I hope the worst is past. If the answer to the appeal comes to-morrow it will put a stop to all this. . . .

*November 16th.*—How much is past since I last wrote. On Friday I got positive news of the appeal coming off. . . . Then I got a circular printed about the coming inquiry. Next morning I got the official answer, and a letter from Rawlinson, the engineer who was to come. The telegrams crossed and re-crossed about it, and as to whether I should go to town or not. At last I determined to go. . . . I found my people all right, and saw Henry next day. He gave me some good instructions for my guidance with Rawlinson, and what was more comforting still, the most absolute assurance that whatever Government could do would be done for us in this matter. On Monday I came back, having been put in another world by this day's absence—lifted clear out of the old rut, and set with a stronger, clearer faith, on higher ground.

During the next few days the Government engineer visited the town, inspected it in company with the engineers appointed by the school and by the local Sanitary Board, and expressed the most decided opinion that the town authorities should deal with the work at once. "If the work was not done, and done quickly," he said, "they would send down their own engineers and men, and charge it to the parish. There is this whip to resort to, though we should be very unwilling to use it."

This decisive interference of Government brightened up the gloomy outlook.

"Thus ended," the diary goes on to say, "a great day for me. The local tyranny is shut up now for a time, and in a great degree for ever. They never again will dare to indulge in dreams of complete security. . . . Altogether I feel a great cloud rolled away and rolling away, and begin to see light and breathe freely. How wonderful it is how God has sent me the right men at the right time to deliver me. I am filled with astonishment and thankfulness. It is very wonderful."

*November 26th.*—The late trouble already seems more like a nightmare than a reality ; at least the reality of it now seems so small beside the greater reality that one has "lifted up one's eyes" and seen that it becomes by comparison unreal. I thank God for my life and work. . . . I could not help being really amused at a leading article in a daily paper which I found awaiting me on my return, in which I am described as a "bigoted, old-fashioned hater of pure air and water." So much for the public and their way of going on.

The dangers of the outbreak were infinitely increased by the conflict which henceforth went on between the school and the local sanitary authorities. The latter were exceedingly irritated by the appeal which Thring, in justifiable distrust of them, had made to the Central Board in London, and no effort was spared to throw the whole blame for neglect in the past upon the school alone.

During the month of December, under the direction of Government and other engineers, all the school buildings were thoroughly dealt with, and were certified by the highest authority to be in perfect sanitary condition. Having thus done their best, without regard to expense, Thring and his masters were naturally anxious to reopen school.

Having no reserve of foundation or other public funds to fall back upon, the long discontinuance of work placed the severest strain upon their private

resources, and hence upon the very life of the school. But the influence of the Sanitary Board made itself felt in the governing body, and permission to reopen was with difficulty obtained. The story proceeds in the diary :—

*January 18th, 1876.*—Trustees' meeting. What a curious chapter, if I had time to write it, the events of the last two months would be, with all the danger, all the meanness, all the moving to and fro, the hanging about Government offices, the reports from Uppingham of more evil and more lies, the delay that was ruin, the dead weight of tyranny that under the guise of law was destruction, the activity of Mr. Birley and Jacob, the kindness and help of the Government, the sulkiness and resistance of the locals,—all make a jumble of work and trial most strange and dreamlike. To-day, in spite of my bringing down on Saturday not only Rawlinson's report but a Government authorisation based on it for calling together the school, Mr. Jacob and Birley had great difficulty in getting it done. And they sat playing with men's lives—talking blandly of waiting for Haviland's and Field's report. Had they done so, I should have sent in my resignation this very day. For carrying on the school under the local authorities would have been impossible. As it is, to-day marks an epoch. The first great campaign in this war marks a victory, though what will yet be the end God knows, for much is yet to come. Rawlinson's report is all we can wish, so is Tarbotton's. The first has gone to every parent; the second is going. The water-works on the hill are going on well; the new well in Fairfield is getting forward. All has been done by us that mortal man can do, but to this hour nothing has been done by the town, not even the ventilation of the sewer ordered by Rawlinson. It is a strange outburst of evil. I did not think till to-day that the phalanx was so strong, but it appears that great sulkiness prevails in the county at the local authority being overridden. . . . To think, too, of the weeks of care and work necessary to get even thus far. But God has made it. He has willed to humble us and crush us and bring us low, and blessed be

His will. For I feel infinitely freer, less selfish, more manly, for this great shaking, and though the anxiety and risk of next term must be very great . . . and we hardly know what is coming, and all is distorted like a nightmare, nevertheless, I have never felt at the beginning of the half-year less a coward than now, or so little moved by the petty vexations and thorns. The Government were wonderfully good to me.

The hostility of the local authorities culminated in a report of the medical officer of health for the district to his Board. This document was an arraignment not only of the sanitary condition of the schoolhouses, but of the structure and management of the school, and even of the motives by which the masters were actuated in dealing with the outbreak of fever. Had this report been generally accepted as an accurate and unbiased statement of the facts, Uppingham must have been ruined. The best answer to it lay in the unshaken confidence of parents in the management of the school. Within ten days after this extremely hostile report had been issued under the sanction of the Sanitary Board the whole school, with the exception of about a dozen boys, had returned, while the number of new entries was nearly as large as usual. Meanwhile, the local authorities, vigorous in denouncing the defects of the schoolhouses, displayed an almost incredible apathy in dealing with the purification of the town. Their hostility and neglect were not to be finally overcome for many weary months, till several deaths from fever, including that of the chairman of the Sanitary Board itself, had disclosed the true nature of the situation, and till the school had been well-nigh wrecked by a new outbreak of fever.

## To SIR HENRY THRING.

*January 19th, 1876.*

. . . Yes, we have had a squeak for it, a much greater squeak than you are aware of. Yesterday the Trustees met in solemn conclave as of old, and in spite of the Government warrant, in spite of all the expense we have been at, in spite of delay in any case being very like ruin, Mr. Birley and Jacob had great difficulty in carrying a resolution that the school should reassemble next week. . . . So there is plenty of scope for danger ahead, the more so, as up to this hour the town has positively done nothing during these three months, nothing since five years ago the wells were condemned. They have neither flushed the sewers, disinfected them or the houses, provided water, nor even yet ventilated the sewers, which Rawlinson expressly ordered, and they promised should be done. There is danger enough in the air, without doubt. You are quite right too about the sensitiveness of a school. When the school was weaker fifteen or sixteen years ago the least mismanagement in any house was followed at once by a falling off in entries. This was often the first indication I had of a master's shortcomings. So delicate a barometer is a school. . . . This affair will last my time as it is. If we have fever again, however slightly, it may crumple us up finally for this generation. And as the town does nothing, and will continue its policy of a masterly inactivity as long as it dares, I don't feel very confident on this head so far of the state of things. Now for my judgment. No vexation, pain, or humiliation that is merely personal will make me alter my work. But the moment anything is done that permanently lowers or affects the work of education prejudicially I go. Don't be afraid ; I shan't come on the parish, neither do I mean to act in haste. This is the deliberate policy of a lifetime, held to during all these twenty-two years in which I have met with humiliation, hindrances, and kicks to a degree you have no idea of, and, I venture to say, have never dreamt of as possible. . . .

The position I take up is simple. It is this.

For twenty-two years I have worked solely for the good of

boys and true education. I might have made a fortune twice, and had much greater glory, but at the expense of true work, and I did not. I do not say this to boast, but to show calmly that I know what I am about, that I have counted the cost, and am not acting on impulse, or hastily, but on the settled deliberate convictions of a life. The work of schools is very complicated, anxious, and exacting, requiring knowledge, management, life-power to an unusual degree. It cannot be done if it is liable to have ignorant outsiders deciding on questions of life and death, and interfering constantly. I do not mean that men will not be found to undertake the work, but there will be a steady downward drag and lowering of the kind of work and the kind of men. There is a steady downward drag going on now. It would be ludicrous, if it was not so important, to see my Trustees, an exceptionally good set, sitting in solemn conclave playing with other men's lives. . . . Yet there they are totally ignorant of the business of school, also passing judgment on us and our work and our fortunes, and prescribing, as yesterday, business matter on which our all hinges. As far as this is only personally humiliating, as I said before, I have borne it and shall continue to bear it, but the moment the life of school work is in question, and anything is done here which really affects the broad interests of education in the country, I shall overthrow it, or resign. No power on earth shall compel me to stay in this place an hour beyond the time that the true work I have lived for continues to be true work. . . .

*Sunday, January 23rd.*—What a great thing it is, our having got our reports out first. Whatever happens, I see God's hand most plainly in this permitted outburst of evil power. It is so utterly irrational that it is clear we are meant to be sifted and the sifting is meant. Many things also fit in and persuade me that God is guiding it all, so I am less troubled than I should be, though so much present cares, so much certain loss in my poverty-stricken finances, so much deadly danger for the coming term, and so much malice round about one, are all heavy and full of fear. Yet, I am sure it is God's work we are doing, sure that the end now or hereafter is to be good and blessed, sure that the present has very much of spiritual power and grace, making the cross endurable.

"Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in Him."

*January 24th.*—Private copies of the indictment of the school going about. The masters very troubled, and there is plenty of reason, for it is, I hear, as was to be expected, clever and scurrilous to the last degree. Certainly there is much darkness. But as we have often said in old days, "If this thing is of God, it will stand; if not, let it go." It is some years now since I felt any sense of possible ruin to the prosperity of the school. All the troubles have been the internal ones that threatened the inner life. This, however, aims at smashing up the outer fabric and destroying us as a school, and I feel accordingly something of the old days over again, with the shadowy spectres of outward rumours and outward coldness and falling off gathering up and closing all our horizon. . . . These are life realities—these bitter attacks of unprovoked evil. How strange it seems to live the Psalms in this way!

*Wednesday, 26th.*—I cannot help my heart feeling heavy. I wonder during how many years of my life *bed* has been the one haven and longed-for forgetfulness of care. Ilminster three years, then a long interval in which it only occasionally was better than waking, then a short period of knowledge-hunting joy, when one would gladly have got rid of it, and then since coming here almost an unbroken period in which, on the whole, the one human solace has been the rest and the forgetting. I do not mean that I have not had much, very much, that I am grateful for, of mere human pleasantness, but that, on the whole, the cares of the day have outweighed the joys and made one glad of bed as an escape. So it is now. All this turmoil, and soon added to it the hard routine of school work, overshadowed by the dread of fever and underfretted by the troubles with masters, either from their shortcomings or their self-assertion. Truly, bed is a wonderful haven, and I do thank God for having given me through so many years *sleep*. "He giveth His beloved sleep"; may it not be in this lower sense as well as in the higher? I would fain think so; at least, I know His gift of sleep has been nothing less than a gift of life to me. . . .

*January 28th.*—Most of the boys back. It seems very

natural. Pray God keep us this term. Masters' meeting this morning. Had to speak to them strongly about tittle-tattle on questions affecting the common body, when the individual tongue carries a certain authority as belonging to the body. . . .

*January 29th.*—Quite pleasant the boys being back, and with active work some of the fears go. There is less time to think of them. I am not afraid either when brought face to face with the thing. It is the expecting you know not what that is so trying. As far as I can find out, counting those who were ill and left, and those who have been withdrawn because of the fever, there are twelve—six of each set.

I have read the report to-day. It illustrates what I have so often pointed out—the impossibility of getting at the truth in a complicated matter. It is simply impossible to answer it, as every virtual lie always is. You can perhaps outflank it, or make an adverse judgment be passed, but as for putting out the actual truth, that is impossible; it is too subtle. . . .

I was almost amused when I read it, at the ease with which I was made out a liar and a scoundrel. . . . It marvellously opens a man's eyes when he has once or twice seen himself pictured in the "devil's looking-glass"; he gets a sounder idea of man's praise and blame, the latter especially. I may yet go down to posterity as the great flogger, and "bigoted old hater of pure air and water," and senseless, unfeeling tyrant over boys which these fellows paint me.

*Sunday, January 30th.*—I think sometimes of the ship on the sea and the useless rowing, and Jesus away, as I brood over this strange visitation and its wild senseless clamour, "the sea and the waves roaring," and the fine fresh enthusiasm which in old days made me *feel* Jesus with me dulled and blunted by many an hour of buffeting and many weary days. And I trust that Jesus is now coming to us too, and that we shall find a great calm, and be at our haven where we would be. I know how good this all is, but my heart is tired and I am growing old.

*January 31st.*—There are thirty new boys at once, and 305 on the school-books, so we have not suffered an appreciable check.

*February 6th.*—The first week over, such a blessing, and Time, the healer, moving slowly on, carrying us, please God, out of immediate danger by degrees. It is a great relief, the having begun, and not simply waiting and waiting for another stage of trial. The being *in it* is so much less trying than the waiting for it. Moreover, when a thing is begun it can come to an end. . . .

*February 7th.*—Professor Wanklyn has written a letter to the *Sanitary Record*, in which the calumnies first appeared, and signed it with his name, exposing thoroughly their false spirit. In fact, the report is smashed as an authority by such a letter, and it will probably bring out more. It looks like the beginning of the end. But in any case it alters our whole position, and enables us at once to value by this independent witness the whole report. I am greatly cheered by it. The whole thing shrinks down to its proper spiteful level when touched by a word of independent truth.

But great as had been the trials through which the school had gone, greater were yet to come. Barely three weeks of the new term had passed when a fresh outbreak of fever changed the whole aspect of affairs, and brought the school to the very brink of ruin.

*February 20th.*—This morning I have entered once again the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and the dark creeping blackness is coming over us again. Cobb came in before chapel to tell me he was almost sure he had a case of typhoid in his house. Poor fellow! he quite broke down as he told me; and, indeed, the thought is deadly enough, and all day I have moved in a dream of fear in the pleasant sunshine. But I have not heard yet the final decision. It is likely enough, I fear, as the town has done nothing, neither flushed the drains nor disinfected them, and in fact really done nothing except the ventilators they were compelled to put in, and these were not put in till the school was here. . . . Cobb has just been in to say it is so. T. in his house has typhoid, and I have given him a notice for Hawthorn to print to send out to every parent to-morrow night, and all his boys will be sent

off to-morrow ; the Valley of the Shadow of Death is round us again. "God's hand is heavy upon us day and night."

*February 21st.*—Sent Bagshawe to try and get the sewer flushed. The town is feebly moving under this fresh pressure. . . . All Cobb's boys sent home, and much fear that there is a case in Haslam's house. Sent a notice to every parent in the school of the fact of the case of typhoid. I expect an exodus rather this week, but we must face the worst. If the town incubus was off us we could get on. But unless it can be hauled off our shoulders we perish. It is hard to lie under the feet of such men.

*February 22nd.*—A beautiful spring day with showers and sun. Not so many boys gone home as I expected as yet. But it is quite possible that we may be left here pretty well alone. If Waugh in Haslam's has the fever, I expect we shall be. . . . For the first time to-day the sewers have been flushed. The sewer in the school lane has been examined and found foul enough to account for any fever. The rector was hauled to see it, and has heard some plain truths too, I understand. In the meantime we perish. The tradesmen are beginning to be anxious, as well they may. . . .

*February 23rd.*—Got up this morning quite prepared for any amount of boys going home and letters to match. My own letters, with one exception, all full of sympathy and confidence. One from Mr. Jacob telling me that the Liverpool parents, through their town clerk, are going to send in a memorial to Mr. Sclater Booth to get the town ordered to do its duty, and that there is a strong feeling of sympathy and confidence there. . . . So we have both the medical and engineer department agreed. All the masters have had nothing but kind letters. There has been a wonderful steadiness in our parents this time. No boy has been sent home to-day.

*February 28th.*—An eventful day. Barring an hour at dinner-time I worked from 9 to 5.15, and so got off the answer to the Central Board by to-night's post. This is the last death-grapple with the town in its worst features. They would have it, and now the whole truth of their culpable supineness is brought out after they have emptied their quiver, and prevented themselves from taking up another line. I

could have wished it had been otherwise, but there is no help for it. It is a simple matter of the school continuing to exist. Mr. Birley and Jacob helped me, suggested and approved, and I consulted them on the main line to be taken. So, though I wrote it nearly all myself, and sent it in my name, it has their *imprimatur* on it. It is a good piece of work. I had no idea what a fatal case could be marshalled against them. . . . No fresh case of fever, I am thankful to say. Every day's respite gives hope. Even if another attack does come it will not empty the school with a rush as might well have happened last week, and we have now, too, a great power moving, and the confidence and support shown by the parents last week is wonderfully encouraging. . . . I cannot but marvel how always at the right moment we receive help, and strange enemies and attacks are met by stranger and more powerful friends always. And men would tell us God is far off, and that there are no miracles. Fools! there are no eyes.

*Ash Wednesday.*—Truly a day of sackcloth and ashes, yet with sunshine. This morning in much dread about D., who is still reported doubtful, but also poor Mullins came up to me in Fairfield to tell me that Paley says he thinks little Turner in his house has typhoid. So to-morrow he is to come again, and if it is so, the school will slip away like a wreath of snow.

*March 2nd.*—The blow has fallen. Turner, a little boy in Mullins's house, decided to have typhoid. The house goes home to-morrow. In the face of the malignant and watchful enmity we encountered last half-year, nothing else can be done. I am postponing till to-morrow the notice to all the parents, because we expect to be obliged to add D. in Christian's house, and one notice is better than two. . . . Altogether the clouds gather round very heavy, and there seems small hope, yet I cannot help seeing that if we are to be delivered from these wicked, dull-hearted men who oppress us, it can only be by a great external power being called in, and that, methinks, is what God is doing. But like the Israelites in the wilderness, I am still inclined to murmur at the new difficulty, however often I have been delivered before. This is however very deadly, and unless speedy help does

come the school is ruined for years, and I and mine. Well—the wilderness does not look inviting at this moment.

To T. H. BIRLEY.

*March 3rd, 1876.*

One thing I feel quite sure of, that this is the beginning of the end. Unless prompt measures are taken in London the school is done for. In spite of the great feeling shown, it is not possible that the beliefs of those who believe best will stand these repeated shocks on a different tack, and one of dim and uncertain fear. Neither can the masters, who are, as a body, needy men, hold out long against the strain of no income and large establishments. The Chancellor's letters furnish us with an admirable barometer of what to expect from the powers that be in this place. I fully think we shall be pulled through; but I know that this dead corpse of the locality must be hauled off us quickly, or we perish. There is no foundation to fall back on for a while, not even a friendly and energetic neighbourhood. People will be very resigned to Providence till the thing is done, then those who have lost money will mourn over their purses; that is about all.

But no ordinary measures could stem the torrent which now threatened to overwhelm the school. It "rained telegrams" from anxious parents. Another week of inaction, Thring often said afterwards, would have settled the fate of Uppingham. A new school might in years to come be built up there, but the school that then was, its boys and its masters, would have been scattered without hope of reunion. Before return could be made possible the boys would have found new schools; the masters, for the most part men with families, with their property tied up in the school-houses, and dependent on the incomes derived from them, would have been forced to seek new posts. Immediate and practically irretrievable ruin stared

Uppingham in the face. Schools had suffered from epidemics before, but from nothing like this. Rugby had once been broken up for some weeks, and the masters had taken groups of boys to keep up a portion of the teaching work at various points in the Lake district. But Uppingham could not be treated piece-meal in this way ; the tutorial and house system made it impossible ; the school from its very organisation had to be dealt with as a unit if dealt with effectively.

Migration began to be talked of among some of the masters. Thring, battling with local stupidity and enmity, caught at the suggestion. If his men were willing to follow him in a great enterprise, he was prepared to lead.

TO SIR HENRY THRING.

*March 4th, 1876.*

Believe me, I am no alarmist, nor am I in a state of excitement. But things are in quite as critical a state as I told you.

Winchester with its foundation and ancient renown could be torpid for fifty years and recover. Marlborough with its busy squadrons of shareholders could also wait till they had worked things round. But Uppingham has no foundation and no shareholders, and instead of the latter a neighbourhood that will very resignedly accept the will of Providence when they ruin the school by doing nothing. We cannot hold the school together much longer ; I doubt whether Tuesday next will see us with a third of the boys left here. They are melting away. The town will practically do nothing—that is, it will think itself immensely energetic if in the next six months it is preparing the preliminaries for beginning. But this is ruin.

We are thinking if we are deserted by the boys next week of migrating to the Lakes and getting all our classes together there till the summer, just to keep the school connection going. . . .

*March 5th.*—The migration idea has been started, and I have encouraged it so far as to say that I should seriously entertain the idea of taking the school to the Lakes if we could not hold it here.

I have written to Jacob and Birley at once, offering to go to Manchester and meet them, and told them that nothing remains but to take our Easter holiday at once and go to the Lakes or somewhere, and reassemble the school for the summer there. So I trust this dreary drama will be played out, and the town authorities left to beat the air. . . . In spite of all the difficulty ahead, the feeling of cutting short this dreadful state of deadness and spite here is as the feeling of a prison thrown open, and a walking out into free air. How wonderful God's ways with us are! I am filled with wonder.

Action was now a question not merely of days, but of hours. Thring felt that it would be useless in a crisis requiring such rapid decision to wait for the opinion of his uncertain governors. Upon his Liverpool and Manchester men he knew he could rely for resolute action, and them alone he decided to consult.

To T. H. BIRLEY.

*March 5th.*

Campbell has just come to me with a letter from one of his parents whose boy has gone home, to say he has typhoid —came home with it.

It seems to be absolutely impossible to hold the school together. I have proposed to Mr. Jacob to meet him at your house to-morrow. He or you or both will wire me. The only plan left, it appears to me, is to take our Easter holiday in town, to send out to-morrow or next day a circular to all our parents asking them if they will send their boys to us in three weeks' time at the Lakes or elsewhere, and to migrate till the summer whilst things are being set right here.

*March 7th.*—Back from Manchester. . . . We decided to

break up the school on Tuesday next, and reassemble, probably in Wales, as a place which seems especially appropriate offered itself, and a great hotel-keeper there has come into Mr. Birley to-day eager to get us. When I got near Uppingham I met Rawsley and Skrine, the former very eager to stop the school breaking up. No doubt it is a grievous thing. However, I showed them it was impossible to stop. Then when we got here, there was a desire to delay and shilly-shally from one or two, and finally — made a strong set for the hill houses remaining, backed by — This I am determined shall not be. . . . However, on the whole, there is an absolute unanimity on migration. The rector has put his foot into it, having prevented a meeting of governors being called by saying there was no need, and he has already been using threats against us for our action. However, we shall see. I wrote to Mr. Johnson (the patron) on Monday morning. I shall write again to-morrow, and I am acting with the two school trustees. Let them do their worst. We shall achieve a great deliverance for schools from local tyranny and governing bodies. Their only power of action is to dismiss me, and that would not take effect, if they were fools enough to try it, without a struggle. But, indeed, this stroke is simple destruction to the rector. It is a grievous necessity, but it is a necessity, and must be worked out to the end. . . . God help me in all this turmoil and battle.

To T. H. BIRLEY.

*March 8th.*

. . . I fear Field in my house has the fever, though it is not quite certain yet. I have been able to do nothing about Borth to-day, but all looks well. I hear there is a cricket ground there. . . . The rector was sententious and threatening to one of the masters last night. "The Trustees would stop it all." He might just as well try to stop a train with his finger. All the masters are unanimous. Legal or illegal, the only thing left is to do it in the best way. Most assuredly neither boys nor masters remain here to be doctored.

Change of air is the only possible prescription. In great haste.

The support of the Trustees elected by the masters was backed up by that of the hereditary patron, Mr. Johnson, who wrote to express his entire approval of what had been proposed. In reply Thring says:—

To A. C. JOHNSON.

*March 8th.*

Circumstances were so critical that I went into Manchester on Monday to meet Mr. Birley and Jacob, as the only trustee power that in a combined way was accessible to me.

Your letter this morning thoroughly takes in the gravity of the case, and I am very grateful for the interest and sympathy you show, and for the support you give me under these unprecedented circumstances.

I found on reaching Manchester that the question, if I may say so, had become a matter not of days even, but of hours. The editor of one of the papers had been applied to by many parents to find private tutors and schools for the boys at Uppingham, but had told Mr. Birley he would wait the result of our meeting at his house before taking any step. After much anxious deliberation we decided that we had no choice, that unless immediate steps were taken, there would simply be no school left to take any steps about, and I came back to announce that the school will break up for its Easter holidays on Tuesday next, and that we shall reassemble in three weeks' time from that date in some healthy locality away from Uppingham. Most probably Borth, near Aberystwith, will be the place, but we must look carefully before settling. It will be impossible to come back after this second move until all things here are completely set right, and declared to be so by Government authority.

It is very sad. But this plan will certainly keep the school together, and it will be as easy to stay a year as six months, if necessary. Were there no other reason, neither I nor the masters could endure the deadly strain of these trying days and not break down in health. . . .

Pray accept in my own name, and that of all the masters, our most hearty thanks for your encouragement and support.

Once the decision was made vigorous action was taken. Masters had already been detailed to visit various parts of the country, and inquiries had been made in many directions. Meanwhile, notice had been sent to parents that the school would reassemble in three weeks at some place as yet unknown, but which would at least be healthy. It soon appeared that Borth, near Aberystwith, in North Wales, gave the best promise as a temporary home for the school. There followed a fortnight of what Thring afterwards described as "a fierce race for life."

## CHAPTER XII

### UPPINGHAM BY THE SEA

To pull up by the roots a school "as old as an old oak tree" and transplant it to the seaside 200 miles away; to find some roof-tree to shelter for an indefinite length of time each of the 300 boys and the 30 masters of the school with their families; and to do this under the pressure of grave doubts as to whether parents would lend their support, with very insufficient means, and in the short space of an extemporised Easter holiday, was, in truth, an enterprise without precedent in English school life.

It might in after-days become tinged with the soft colours of romance and furnish material for poetry, but at the moment it meant indeed "a fierce race for life." But the spirit of Thring and his masters rose to the occasion. The diary and correspondence once more become our best guide in following the course of events:—

*March 8th.*—A little news from Borth—the hotel will accommodate 200. . . . In the afternoon a telegram from Henry to say that the Local Government Board will send down a medical inspector to-morrow. I don't know who, but it is a move, and will supersede the local authority. But in very truth the relief of not being tied, Mezentius-like, to this dead corpse of the town any more is in itself an

inexpressible relief, if it was possible yet from stress of work to realise it.

*March 9th.*—At last the great wheel is, I think, fairly moved. Our migration has put an end to all temporising, and given the Local Government Board an excuse for moving. Altogether there is a real stir. I had an opportunity this morning of referring to the perfect unanimity of masters, and the hope that no half and half talk would encourage Trustees to set up their backs on the hope of internal dissension. . . . The fearful strain and race against time a little relaxed to-day. A tendency towards headache all the week; possibly a far-off touch of the dreaded foe.

Skrine came to me yesterday to say that money would be wanted, and to put his salary into my hands. I accepted it if there was any expenditure incurred of a public character, e.g. cricket fields, etc. But it is very good. How much of good I have to be thankful for!

*March 11th.*—The first battle of the new campaign fought to-day, and on the whole won. The Trustees have sanctioned the break-up of the school, but on ——'s dictation would not put on record any expression with reference to the migration; in his own words, "They knew nothing of the school till it came back again." He spoke of the chapel and buildings as burdens to the Trust, and endeavoured, whilst taking over some £14,000 worth of property from our hands, to saddle us with the burden of any occasional deficit on the small outlying debts. . . .

*March 12th.*—A quiet day at last. Holy Communion, a very good sermon from Christian in the afternoon. When shall I spend a Sunday again as headmaster in this place? I had a feeling as I stood in chapel to-day, never—never; but then I looked up at Maurice's statue and Anstey's carvings, and the memorial to Green and others whom I loved, and whose lives were living lives here, and then it came back to me again that much was left, and that even this place, with its deadly blight of dull, dead hearts worse than the typhoid, might breathe new life and remain a light.<sup>1</sup> . . . One thing I

<sup>1</sup> "It is Sunday, March 12th, a day of wild wind and pitiless snows, the heaviest of the season. That afternoon we are gathered, with thin ranks,

feel more than I ever have felt, that a great shaping power is round about me, guiding, and ruling, and making, and moulding this fierce crucible work and fiery rush of evil and danger, and friendship, and help all round about one, and that some strange birth of strange good and marvellous divine purpose is to come out of it all. To-morrow I start for Liverpool, and on Tuesday for Borth and other places in North Wales. Borth seems likely to suit from a letter of Cobb's this morning.

To T. H. BIRLEY.

*March 16th.*

All is settled, thanks to Mr. Jacob. We came down through Wales on Tuesday, receiving Cobb on our way and his reports, and reached Borth on Wednesday. The hotel is really excellent, and we have secured the whole of it, with accommodation in it for myself, family, and 160 boys. Then we have taken the adjoining row of lodging-houses, and in fact entered into possession of the whole place. The hotel contracts to do us for £1 a head, we sending in all boy beds and bedding, and finding servants for the boys, he boarding and lodging the latter free. Altogether I feel we are as we could be. The sea is beautiful, so is the view on the hillside at the back, and there is *plenty of space*. Then Aberystwith at our back secures us against any downfall in ways and means of getting on. You may suppose it has been no small matter getting all our agreements in shape. The water and drainage are exceptionally good. So now we have only to work hard

for the last time together under our chapel roof. In a few more hours we shall separate, to meet no one certainly knows where. The eve of war is, in fiction and history, the hour of auguries. It was so now; and when there came in deep tones from the lectern the story of an exile, who at evening lighted on a certain place, and heard in dreams the promise, 'I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land,' there were hands which turned the prayer-book's leaves to see if the fair-omened lesson were the reader's choice, or (as it did) stood so appointed in the calendar."—Skrine's *Memory of Edward Thring*.

this next fortnight and get all things ready, and then may a blessing rest on Uppingham by the Sea.

*March 18th.*—Started on Monday with Skrine for Liverpool, picked up Cobb at Chester on Tuesday and came on to Llandrindod, which Mr. Jacob had been told to look at. Slept there, went to Borth on Wednesday, when we met Haslam and Bagshawe, and made a bargain to take the hotel and all the lodging-houses we could lay hands on. We were much pleased with Borth, if we can but pack into it. Mr. Myton, the lessee of the hotel, is very honest and kindly, and I hope all will be well. On Thursday evening went on to Aberystwith ; parted with Cobb, Haslam, and Mr. Jacob on Friday morning ; then took lodgings for three weeks for my family, came with Skrine to Shrewsbury, where he stayed, and home that night. A brief summary of an important week. Some of the travelling and our evenings were really very pleasant, and anxious and busy as it has been, it was refreshing to be out of this poisonous air and its meanness and malice, or perhaps ignorance and ill-nature.

*March 19th.*—This morning got news to my great relief that the best lodging-house at Borth, the one I most feared about, is to be had. This greatly eases matters. I feel so grateful at the deliverance from the town and the having time once more at our disposal. It is like an escape out of prison. Things may be hard at Borth ; there must be much difficulty, but it is the hardness of liberty, not the close deadly grip of a prison.

*March 26th.*—At Aberystwith, with a delightful sense of freedom. . . . Sir Pryse Pryse has given us an excellent cricket ground at a nominal rent, and is kindness itself. . . . To-morrow morning begins real hard work, but liberty. Thank God ! How happy it is to be Christ's servant !

*March 27th.*—A day of hard but most cheery work, everybody so kind and helpful—such a contrast to Uppingham. I have really enjoyed my day, although I was kept at it incessantly from 8 A.M. till 6. I found to my great satisfaction when I got to Borth all the sanitary improvements going on briskly under the engineer of the Cambrian Railway. . . . I inspected all the houses, went home, made plans assigning them, came out again to see whether I had them right, and

finally settled everything, getting all the boys and most of the masters in place. Then I went out and secured three more small houses, and now I feel myself fairly level with the numbers and on a good basis. . . .

*March 29th.*—Such a day's work yesterday. . . . The unpacking and confusion was very great. . . . Marie and Sarah and I worked hard. Sarah put beds together, and I carried mattresses with the men, and we got all our beds put up. To-day we have had all the rooms washed and are ready for the boys, barring making the beds. Things are clearing to-day. I got to my great delight house-room for sixty or seventy boys' study work. It was great fun bargaining with some of the old Welsh women. One old lady, to Cobb's great delight, shook me affectionately by the shoulders. How we laughed; they are very pleasant and primitive some of them. I feel now so free. Uppingham and all its abominations, . . . gone for a time, albeit danger and difficulty and toil are before me.

#### TO SIR HENRY THRING.

*March 31st, 1876.*

I see my way here and have got through the heavy work. Things are falling into place better than I dared hope. Every one helps us, and I feel such a sense of freedom and liberty in work, now for a time Uppingham and its abominations are left behind. We shall do well, I hope. The place pleases all of us; a fine sea, and most lovely views.

You never saw such a scene as last Monday and Tuesday: eighteen trucks of bedding and furniture unloaded and to be set in order again. We get 150 boys, myself, and family, a master, and two matrons into the great hotel. The passage on the ground floor is fitted up with a narrow table for dining and will seat 140. Then we have twenty-two lodging-houses of various kinds occupied by us and our belongings. We move in nearly 400 strong—such a colony starting at a moment's notice means no little stir. I arranged where everybody was to go last Monday after having worked the thing out carefully. I could almost write an inventory of Borth lodging-houses, rooms, and prices from memory.

We shall be ready all right on Tuesday next, as far as I can foresee. But you would be amused if you saw our human hive settling down.

*April 6th.*—How much has passed since Sunday and what a whirl it all is. On Tuesday the first batch of boys came in, and a proper tussle it was to get the confusion settled ; upwards of 100 boys and their luggage let loose on us without any practice to meet it.

*April 7th.*—The first happy day I have spent for many months. This morning I got a letter from Captain Withington at Liverpool, who has sent back his boy, saying that he and Mrs. Withington agreed that now was the time to show that they cared for the school and appreciated our great effort, and that he proposed writing to every parent to subscribe towards the expenses—the subscription to be limited to £5. This is immensely cheering, both as one more sign that our work is blessed, and also as giving us the sinews of war in our new circumstances. Thank God for His goodness in this ! Then to-day I finished off assigning a place of work to every boy in the hotel, and was able to do it really very fairly well. This is an intense relief—the having cleared out the chaos into reasonable working shape for every boy.

*April 8th.*—A fine day again. Such a blessing that the boys just at this time get pleasant impressions, and that we can let them out of doors during the crush of the first settling. . . . The end of the first week here. It is marvellous ; all things are working well, and really we shall, by God's blessing, spend a happy and good working time here.

How strange life is ! How little one knows what is best ! Life is best, the living the day manfully, truly, and humbly. Not what we plan, but how we live. Not what we aim at doing, but how we do what we have to do—that is God's life.

The misfortunes of the school and the bold step of removing it to the sea-coast had attracted much public attention. The editor of the *Times* asked Thring to send him some account of the removal and settlement of the school in its new home. This account was sent

off during the first week of the stay at Borth. Some of its paragraphs give vivid pictures of the migration.

There is a comical side to most disasters, and the sudden uprooting of the school at Uppingham has been no exception to the rule. The contented owners of houses over-night practically found themselves, like Aladdin, staring into vacancy in the morning. The houses were there, indeed, as usual—that was the jest—but as far as living in them went, they had vanished. Four hundred people were turned loose, with just three weeks given them to hunt for a place to settle in, to find it, and to settle in it when found. So the school was adrift, sent out its pioneers, explored, discovered its haven, and then straightway found itself, with a curious sense of relief, the temporary master of a goods train running through to Borth in Cardiganshire. Not that hearts were not heavy for the past and present troubles, heavy with anxious fear of the work and the risk of the experiment. Sorrow, too, there was in the last looks at the homes that had to be left. Gardens and flowers and fields were seen through a haze of parting and wistful regrets. Nevertheless, there was a freshness in the new opening ; a quickening sense of freedom and escape in the possibility of being able to work once more in peace.

So Uppingham was left, and faces were set towards Borth. At Borth, of course, every one was on the *qui vive* about the strange colony that was coming in so suddenly in this rolling lump. Very kind and very willing was the reception given by the little village to the school pioneers ; and right well they worked. Workers, indeed, were wanted, for, if any one wishes for a new experience, let him try the unloading and rearranging eighteen railway trucks, and the distribution of their contents among twelve or fourteen houses in a fierce match against time. This was all done and finished off between Tuesday, 28th March, and Tuesday, 4th April. The great hotel was arranged to receive 150 boys, the head-master, and his family, an assistant-master, and two matrons. A row of lodging-houses flanking the hotel take another 150 boys, and most of the masters ; long narrow tables are run down the hotel passage on the ground floor, the large coffee-

rooms and the billiard-room below are treated in the same way, and 350 people—boys, masters, and masters' families—dine at one time by this extemporised arrangement. Twenty-seven lodging-houses in all, and a large public hall, have been secured for school use. A room, 83 feet by 20 feet, is being put up of rough shingle behind the hotel, in order to hold the whole school when needed. The stables are turned into the school carpentry, the large coach-house shed into a gymnasium; a lavatory, with thirty basins, is being roughly put up; and altogether the school has shaken into place and got its working machinery in most unexpectedly good order. A beach, 4 miles long, with splendid sands, stretches away in front of the hotel, with plenty of pebbles, and the sea to throw them into. An aquarium will be started this week. An octopus, most liberal of its *sepia*, has been already caught. The beach is closed on the south by the hills, on the north by the river Dovey and the hills beyond it. These hills seem to form an amphitheatre behind, round a broad stretch of peat which lies between them and the sea. The views are lovely, and the place is suggestive of shells and aquariums and sea-birds in front, and of botany and rambles in the rear, while Aberystwith, with a railway running to it, forms a good base of operations for the colony to shop in and fall back on. Cricket goes on on the sand in a bay, and an excellent field, unfortunately 4 miles off, but on the railway, has been secured for half-holiday practice and matches. Sir Pryse Pryse, of Goderdden, may simply be said to have made a present of it to the school for the time. Indeed, everybody, high and low alike, has given ready help and welcome. The Bishop of St. David's, who owns some land near the hotel, has allowed the school to have what they want for cricket there, if practicable; so Uppingham by the Sea can do something besides throwing stones into the water. One short week saw this all done. It was like shaking the alphabet in a bag, and bringing out the letters into words and sentences, such was the sense of absolute confusion turned into intelligent shape.

On Tuesday, 4th April, a new phase began, and a week of stiff preparation was succeeded by a week of experiment. About half-past six in the evening a long train was seen wind-

ing along the flat, and as it drew near to the station, which was crowded with masters and spectators, it might be supposed to turn into a gigantic poultry train, so thick were the heads thrust out of the coops all along. Soon it ran up and out-poured the garrulous mass, and Babel began. However, they were soon, in true poultry fashion, hurried into the long table and tea, then turned out on the beach ; while the still more difficult task of reducing trunks, hampers, book-boxes, and everything conceivable, which heaped the station platform, into something like order began. This went on till night fell at last on weary masters and curious boys in their new berths. Much the same scenes, only in more orderly fashion, ensued next evening ; by which time the whole school, some 290 odd, had arrived. But the arrangements were now not all strange, and the kitchen stood the shock of war with unexpected success ; no mean thing for hungry boys. Then came the billeting them off for work. Various cottages receive some eighty or ninety, as a substitute for the studies they have at Uppingham. The class-room accommodation is surprisingly good. The new room, however, is not yet up. This will relieve pressure, especially in rainy weather.

There are many of the old resources at Borth, but, whatsoever pastime may flourish or languish transplanted to this strange soil, there are two sources of enjoyment unfailing here, unknown to the school in its Midland home—the mountains and the sea. The boys wander out from the hotel doors, swarming like bees round a bee-hive, down to the broad reach of shingle and sand. Tea is over, and all the school is flocking to enjoy the sunset and watch the rising tide. They are doing what boys always do on the sea-shore—dodging the waves, hurling pebbles at them as they come in, burrowing in the sand for shells, cracking stones in the vain hope of finding jewels inside, or poring over the wooden reefs that rise so strangely from the sand, as the tide is not yet up—the long-buried fragments, so says the legend, of the lost Lowland Hundred. Those clear colours in the west where the sun sets in the sea, the rippling light beneath the clouds, the scattered groups of figures moving in the twilight somewhat darkly, with a pleasant freshness of boyhood all round, form a scene not easily forgotten. The dusky headlands

stand out to seaward, with a white gleaming of broken waves at their feet ; and landward shadowy mountains beyond the purple still catch a little glory from the sun. The low talk of pensive strollers, the rattle of pebbles, the laughter of those who chase each other in merry vein, all mixed with the roar of the sea, and perchance some strains of music from the choir at practice thrown in, give sights and sounds that may make the school, if not unfaithful to Uppingham it has left, yet more than half-reconciled to the new land.

New, indeed, and strange enough it all is. The whole scene and circumstances, both in and out of doors, have to be readapted to the old familiar work in unfamiliar ways. A partial shaking down has been accomplished ; and, as if to make the first week truly represent the old school life, the last foot-ball match of the season, a broken-off fragment of the Uppingham left behind, was played out on the Saturday half-holiday ; and the champion cup of the year awarded to the winners. So the jerseys, white or red, met in their mimic war in the new land. Thus ended the first week, and its evening closed on a quiet scene of school routine ; as if doubt, and risk, and turmoil, and confusion, and fear, weary head, and weary hand, had not been known in the place. The wrestling match against time was over, and happy dreams came down on Uppingham by the Sea.

To G. R. PARKIN.

BORTH, April 20th, 1876.

I got your welcome letter this week just after our exodus and its great rush of work and danger. 'Tis a strange world. Uppingham has fairly turned us out of house and home, and here we are, having had just three weeks to colonise in. . . .

I send you my article in the *Times* as the easiest way of telling you the main facts of the migration. . . . But it tells nothing of all the knocking about to try and get things right in the first instance. It tells nothing of all the delays and antagonism, nothing of our anxious experiment to try and maintain our ground independently of the town before the second outbreak of fever. Nothing also of the deadly doubts

and fears when it was on us again, and of the dire need there was to fly elsewhere, or else no school would have been left in another week to deal with. As it is, all the boys followed us, and the parents have stuck to us with wonderful steadiness, and are now going to subscribe to pay part of the expense. But it is a fearful time, and success only means great pain and risk and loss not ending in utter overthrow and destruction. As for me, I should have resigned long ago if it was not for the cause I have at heart and the men who are engaged in it with me. . . . This place is wonderfully adapted for our purpose, and though there are great difficulties we shall, I think, pull through and save the life of the school. Yet it is gall and wormwood to me to have to think of going back to Uppingham. Is success in this great strait only to end in that? But I will not be faithless. Uppingham itself may be a very altered Uppingham by the time we return, its moral sewage much drawn off and in its proper place as well as its physical sewage, or there may be a wise purpose to come out elsewhere in consequence. I quite agree with you in your dread of Government, but there is a worse evil still—"inferior local authority" set over you. If you must put the *life* into leading strings, and the living acting power is not to be trusted to do its own work, at least put the leading strings in the hand of the highest, and do not have a low neighbour, *always on the spot*, get his dead hand on your heart. *Keep free* if possible. Resist everything but the right of the Government to see that good *average* work is done. Otherwise all improvement, all deviation from routine, all new teaching method, and new ways of training become impossible. . . .

The history of the Uppingham sojourn at Borth has been written by the skilful hand of one who took an active part in the migration, and who had a poet's eye for the picturesque aspects of the situation. To this record the interested reader may be referred for detailed and graphic descriptions of the life of the school in its temporary home.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Uppingham-by-the-Sea: a Narrative of the Year at Borth*, by J. H. S. Macmillan and Co.

While Thring himself exulted in the new sense of freedom which he felt in being away from Uppingham, and was keenly alive to the romantic features of his great enterprise, he still found that he had on his hands a task of almost crushing weight.

Masters and boys alike were to be inspired with the campaigning spirit ; the routine of school life had to be worked out under the greatest difficulties, so far as school machinery was concerned ; questions of finance were knotty and perplexing. All these things and many more had to be dealt with, while he received scant sympathy, to say the least, from some of his trustees at Uppingham.

An old pupil who knew the circumstances well compared, not inaptly, Thring's position at Borth with that of Hannibal in Italy, the pusillanimous government at home giving him quite as much trouble as the difficulties immediately around him on a foreign soil.

Numerous letters among his correspondence at this time show with what deep interest his great venture was being watched, and especially by fellow-teachers.

A Rugby master writes :—

I have been intensely interested in all that I have heard about the carrying of the school to Borth, which, I think, is as wonderful and encouraging an event as has happened in the history of any school. It seems to me that any master in any school, thinking of it, might feel that no difficulties ought to make one despair. And I take the liberty of writing now both to assure you of my personal sympathy and to thank you and your colleagues, if you will let me, for a splendid and inspiring example.

The headmaster of Wellington (afterwards Archbishop Benson) says :—

I cannot help writing you a line to tell you what sympathy

I have felt for you in the sad renewal of your trouble at Uppingham, and what admiration at the pluck, if you will forgive the word, of your move off to Borth. It is quite Roman, and quite of a piece with the recent history of Uppingham. I hope it may be quite as successful as it deserves, and live by and by in the annals of Uppingham as a successful as well as gallant stroke.

Many troubles within and without added to the anxieties of this trying time.

*May 11th.*—I have learnt that to persist in truth is a great offence. How glorified I should have been if I had raised the terms or increased the numbers of the school, allowing each master his two or three more as they asked, and ruined the life by doing it.

*May 26th.*—My bank-books came in this morning—a heavy weight there. I don't quite see how my expenses should be less. But very likely I am wrong. But I have seen such strange things in my life experience, and I so fully believe that modern martyrdom is loss of money and braving that kind of disgrace in a good cause, that I am not so sure that I am wrong. I suppose the martyrs often thought in their hours of prison sadness that, whilst they were right on the whole, they might have said or done this or that better and been spared this or that torture had they done so. Even so do I. The main love for Christ and giving up wealth for His sake I am sure of, whilst some of my debts and difficulties and heart-tearings may very likely be my own selfish mismanagement. But my Father will bless the work and worker for all that. Perhaps as Abram was first brought from Ur to Haran, and then called out of Haran, and his life led on by steps, and the break did not come at once, so it may be with me. At all events, this move to Borth does make another move right away a comparatively easy task, if God wills. Powell of Bisham here. He is a comfort to me, for he believes thoroughly in the guiding of God, and in seeming disaster in a good cause not being a thing to be downcast about. Yet I am very, very troubled, and all the present

is strange and dreamlike, and all the future dark and dangerous. . . .

*May 28th.*—We have now been half our time here ; what a blessing ! I shall not easily forget that morning before prayers in upper school when I stood—about a month before the typhoid—and in a sort of Christian Nebuchadnezzardom rejoiced in the school, and thought that though God could easily shake the school and destroy it I did not quite see how. Now all is floating ; nothing solid any more ; but the faith in good and in the ark on the waters. . . .

The Trustees were now discussing the question of recalling the school to Uppingham after the summer holidays, in the expectation that the sanitation works would by that time be carried out. Thring had little faith in the promises which had been made on this point.

*June 10th.*—Went over to Aberystwith yesterday and talked over our critical position with Mr. Birley. He made the excellent suggestion that I should write to Mr. Johnson and require the Trustees to affirm that the town drainage will be forward enough for the school to return on the 15th September. This is a grand move. First, it is a step when no step seemed possible. Next, it relieves me of antagonism to the Trustees and puts me in seeming obedience—a great fact. Next, it compels them either to affirm that the town will be ready, in which case they are bound to see to it, or to decline the responsibility, in which case I am free to act. This is a great immediate relief. . . .

#### To T. H. BIRLEY.

*June 15th.*—No doubt we shall lose boys. But a loss at Borth is temporary, another case of fever at Uppingham final. Moreover, bear in mind that a *flat* of the Trustees on Saturday for return, *without an affirmation of safety*, means the break-up of the present school. If they *order*, without giving assurance of safety in their judgment, the order *will not be obeyed*. And

I think I may add a large number of the masters will stand by me in this refusal. At all events, it is the end of the present school. As regards losing boys, I hear of probable loss whichever we do. It is strange sitting here and waiting quietly for one's doom, and at such hands.

*June 22nd.*—S. is now convinced that we ought to stay here next term, and shall probably have to do so. I said this should have been the masters' opinion six weeks ago, when it would have made all things easy; that now it was impossible to move after we had entered into communication with the Trustees; that all along I had said it was running our heads into a rat-trap, but the conduct of the masters up to a fortnight ago, in fact up to the meeting, had almost been such as to make me tell Birley and Jacob that to hold Borth with such disaffection was impossible, though easy enough in itself. That we had lost, as I told them weeks ago, almost all the advantage we had gained by our daring move and its trials, and that all that could be done now was to avoid unconditional surrender. I told him also that I knew he thought me headstrong and impulsive, but that the bold dashes or resistance, when I made them, were the most solemn and deliberate acts of my life; that these subjects were on my mind night and day; and that I never did anything dangerous without having very carefully counted the cost, made up my mind to possible defeat, and the more dangerous the more deliberate, at all events, my action was.

The splendid campaigning of the school naturally stirred the enthusiasm of old Uppingham boys. Those at Oxford took the opportunity of the Old Boys' Annual Cricket Match to present to the masters an address expressing their feelings. To this Thring refers:—

*June 30th.*—After luncheon the whole school was called up, and Nettleship presented the Oxford address to the masters, and this is to be followed by a Cambridge and a London one. He made a very good speech, and I replied,

and, as I felt it much, did not do badly. It is of wonderful value at this time. . . . It cheers our hearts, and gives us strength, and it enabled me to speak to the school from a point of view not otherwise possible, and was a great boon in that way. . . . How wonderfully all things are working. I feel, too, so much the beauty and freedom of this place. Here the great trials are battles to be fought in a manly way, and skill and courage are to be exercised.

*July 1st.*—I think things tend more and more to a final breaking away from Uppingham, though at present apparent submission and throwing responsibility on them is the policy to be pursued. . . . Bagshawe yesterday had a long talk with me about this fresh case. He was strong about abandoning Uppingham altogether. So it is clear that he is sound on main points, as I thought. I said it might come to that, and if it did, I certainly should try to refound the school elsewhere. . . .

To T. H. BIRLEY.

*July 7th.*—Major Tulloch said the state of the place “was a scandal,” and that the works must be done. The locals were indiscreet enough to betray their animus by only having their own report on the table, not Rawlinson’s or Tarbotton’s. . . . The drains luckily stank on that day their best. Major Tulloch said his duties took him to many queer places, but he had never been in one so openly foul. . . . Field expressed himself warmly for us, and the doing the work well, and I believe him. Major Tulloch sent me reiterated messages through Bagshawe on no account to allow the school to return before Christmas. He said it would be very dangerous, with the movement of the earth and all the work that had to be done.

To REV. GODFREY THRING.

BORTH, *July 11th, 1876.*

Our term ends next week, not so our troubles, though this has been a splendid success, and the beautiful surroundings, the space, the freedom, but, above all, the welcome, have made this time, in spite of the deadly cares outside, one of

the pleasantest on the whole I have ever spent. The cares have been the other side of the hills, the immediate circle fresh and free. . . . It is quite certain we shall stay another term here, and a very good thing too ; the climate is mild, and we shall do very well, though some of the masters have done their best to cut the ground from under us. Others, however, have behaved very well. It is wonderful how human nature repeats itself. Read the Exodus and you have a grand example of this in small ; the flesh-pots of Egypt are boiling as briskly as in old days still. It is true the Trustees about a fortnight ago were silly enough, in the face of a memorial signed by all the masters, to take on themselves to order the school back without medical authority, and they have trammeled us tremendously, but the Government inspector has delivered so strong a judgment now against the school returning that they will have this week to rescind their resolution. In this hour of trial that has come on me to the full, which I have always denounced—amateur power. . . . There is no dead hand like the dead hand of outside power thrust into the heartstrings of a living work. And we are just catching it.

*July 14th.*—About five o'clock a telegram came in with their resolution, that they saw nothing in Uppingham to cause them to rescind their resolution, but permitted us to stay next term at Borth in consequence of the unanimous protest of the masters. . . .

*July 20th.*—So the fight is over, and the first battle won. The long day's struggle ended, and "happy dreams at last come down on Uppingham by the Sea." Yesterday was a glorious day, bright and hot, but with a good sea-breeze making it thoroughly enjoyable, and a prettier sight than Sir Pryse Pryse's great party and cricket match I never saw. I wish the scene had been photographed. Then the boys presented him with an address and testimonial, and cheered right heartily. Then we sang Uppingham songs. And finally came home after a very pleasant day. A fair ending of a stormy year. . . .

I made my usual speech to the school after the prize-giving, and told them they were living history, and that it was a stirring thing and a great to live it well, to rise equal to their day, and show that they were neither cowards nor

fools. I told them their rough schoolroom typified their life : a poor and makeshift outside, but full of vigorous life—more vigorous than in nobler buildings and a more finished shape. Altogether, my heart is so full of gratitude and thankfulness that I cannot feel it. It is too much to feel. It is like an unreality—a dream. Yet much remains to be done. . . .

During the summer holiday, which Thring spent at Grasmere, preparations were being made for a winter campaign at Borth. Counsels of delay still prevailed in the Midlands, and events had justified the distrust of the masters in the local powers. The school re-assembled at Borth on 15th September—only the day before had the engineers begun their work at Uppingham. The prospect of return, even at Christmas, therefore, seemed most uncertain. The hotel and lodging-houses, intended chiefly for summer visitors, were fitted up in order to lessen as far as possible the discomforts of winter weather.

It had been urged that parents would not send their boys back to face a winter under such circumstances on the Welsh coast, but on 25th September Thring was able to record that “the entries exceed the leavings by one—a refutation of the prophets of evil.”

He notes, too, the kindly welcome which the school received on its return to its seaside home. Sir Pryse Pryse, for instance, arranged that his harriers should come twice a week to hunt near Borth for the benefit of a portion of the school—a great boon to boys cut off from the manifold appliances for amusement and exercise at Uppingham.

Scarcely, however, had the school settled itself to work when there was an outbreak of scarlet fever.

*October 30th.*—No fresh cases. I trust the plague is stayed, and our prayers have been granted. Not that I would pray

to have anything removed that God sends, yet one can pray for help, and if that help comes in the removal of the trial, it is good. But I have learned not to wish to have trials taken away rashly. They are so full of blessing if one can but bear them. Not much trouble in the way of parents. One telegram deserves to be recorded as the right stamp of thing. Mr. Donaldson of Glasgow sent to his son, a new boy here: "Stick into your work and don't mind such a trifle. Tell Bullock that his father agrees with me." That is education. Young Donaldson is not likely to turn out a selfish coward.

While the fears of anxious parents were once more aroused the school had now compelled confidence. A letter written at this time by a parent from Borth to Mr. Jacob in Liverpool is worth quoting, as indicating the energy with which this new danger was met. It shows, too, how little of the holiday excursion there was about the stay at Borth.

I am truly thankful to say that I found my dear boy progressing most favourably, and the other boys who have had an attack are doing as well as possible. Indeed, I cannot express to you my admiration of the foresight and preparation made in every way; houses prepared in the most admirable manner for any emergency, and accommodation as though half the school might possibly be attacked. Further, they have a number of nurses from the London hospitals, so that I feel satisfied that the boys who should get it are much better off than they could be at home.

I should not think of moving a boy, for the lads I have seen all look so well that I doubt if it will extend further.

Anxieties were great, but they were softened by the kindness of the Welsh people. The school was without a hospital, and could only rely upon the cottagers for the means of isolation.

Thring, after searching for hospital quarters, records the spirit in which his needs were supplied:—

Certainly the nice Welsh people are very nice. I have found great kindness and willing help here. So now I feel somewhat master of the immediate difficulties.

The vigorous measures taken checked the epidemic, and the work of the term went on quietly to its end.

Meanwhile the progress of things at Uppingham was being anxiously watched.

*November 1st.*—We hear that the drain work at Uppingham has brought out some fearful revelations, and that the Chairman has had to come and see to it, as the workmen refused, near the Workhouse, to keep on the whole day. I grieve to say there is more typhoid going on there. I suppose at last their eyes must be getting opened, but I don't know. . . . The popular feeling at Uppingham, if not stirred up, must gradually find out that we have been most patient, instead of aggressive.

As the Christmas holidays approached, the further news from Uppingham made it clear that no safety could yet be found in the place. A few of the governors were again bent on recalling the school, but Thring was resolute that till the work of purification was complete no such step should be taken. Were the return ordered he would resign. The services of Dr. Acland<sup>1</sup> were secured, and his strongly adverse report, coming in on the very day of the final meeting of the Board for the decision of the question, convinced wavering judgments, and saved once more the fortunes of the school.

The New Year opened with a tragic proof, in the death of the Chairman of the Local Sanitary Board, of the danger still lurking in the town.

*January 6th.*—On New Year's Day the sad and fearful news reached us that Barnard Smith had died of typhoid fever—apoplexy the immediate cause. Poor fellow! he has fallen a

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Acland.

victim to his own obstinacy and delusions. It brings home to us very close, "He forgives us our trespasses as we forgive."

On 21st January the school was back again in Borth for the winter term. In refutation of the prophets of disaster the new entries of pupils exceeded the leavings, and the total number was up to the standard maximum of the school. Thus it had lost nothing in numbers by its great adventure. It was found on reckoning that when they should return, one-third of the whole school would see Uppingham for the first time.

Masters and boys were now trained campaigners, and in spite of many winter discomforts the routine of work went on steadily to the end of the term.

TO REV. A. H. BOUCHER.

BORTH, *February 2nd, 1877.*

In spite of all prophets of evil, and such prophecies go a long way to fulfil themselves, we are two more in number than last term, and fairly settled down here again. It is indeed great expense, and worry, and loss, but then it is also deliverance from utter destruction. And Dr. Acland's decided judgment against our return was too powerful for our opponents to kick against, though they had publicly given out that we must and should return, and that if I did not choose to do so I must resign. That I most certainly should have done under the circumstances, but now that danger is past. It is curious that after so many years' work one's working life should have been on the scaffold, so to say, three or four times this last twelve months, and each time a reprieve at the eleventh hour.

Our weather compared with England generally has been very good, thought the great storm on Tuesday morning did much damage by the high tide. The lower part of the village has been turned into a beach, and the water came through many of the houses; 4 miles of railway between Glandovey

and Ynyslas have been broken up. It was a very fine sight seeing the sea come in like a great wild beast, twisting and swirling and foaming under the fierce wind. In the afternoon I set all the school at work down the village to help the people, and we did a great deal of good work. This was a grand thing for them to do, and I hope will tend to raise the life here, as well as to make it helpful another day.

To G. R. PARKIN.

BORTH, April 10th, 1877.

I believe I owe you a letter, and I never was more puzzled in my life what to say, or even to know with any accuracy what my real feelings are. Here I am, sitting in the room, with my VIth doing their English school paper, in the *last week* of the stay of the school at Borth. And such a confusion of feeling as cannot be described ebbs and flows in my breast. Sorrow, however, predominates. Sorrow at going back to my prison at Uppingham with its bounded roads, its petty annoyances, and its ill-will, and leaving this free bright shore, these glorious hills, the hearty welcome, and the helping hands of the people here. Then there is much dread of the unpleasant business questions that are sure to crop up in our making our exit here; then there is the dread of the resettlement and all its risks at Uppingham; then there are money troubles many, and packing troubles many. On the other hand, there is the fact of our having brought this wonderful year to a successful close, and been permitted to perform a great feat, and have a great deliverance. It is marvellous when one thinks how a year ago we were turning out into the wilderness not knowing where to go, exiled in a moment, with certain destruction if we did not move, and nowhere to go to if we did, and now we are bringing back a full school from our camp of refuge, far more powerful than when we set out on our pilgrimage. Many of the Trustee questions too have been settled in our favour. Yet it is wonderful how in England here a few amateurs of one's own rank and station can be set with power over the experienced workmen, as they are. I trust you colonies will succeed in preventing amateurs

from being put in authority over skilled work. No court ought to have the ultimate control of any profession, or part of any profession, which has not some professional men sitting on it. You would have enjoyed some of the school excursions here exceedingly ; if for nothing else, there was a strange pleasure in seeing some 200 boys in the middle of school time, as part of their working life, getting a day's run on the mountains, and scattered over the whole of this beautiful country in various parties. . . . I never have had a happy year in my working time, apart from the work itself, before, and this year, when the cares and dangers were not too heavy, the working time has really had a delightful daily life. And now it is almost over, the end has come, and though there is a great sense of a work done, and a danger escaped, there is a great immediate feeling of a free time gone, and of a return to prison.

The Easter holidays of 1877 saw the termination of the year-long exile of the school from its home. Masters and boys had won the regard of the people of Borth, and the term closed with a demonstration of their feeling which touched Thring deeply.

*April 12th, 1877.*—But most of all, and a greater thing than I have ever had in true life, a thing which makes one feel that any adversity may be patiently borne, the people of Borth gave us an ovation last night. They had a procession up the street, halted in front of the hotel, and all the school children formed in semicircle and sang exceedingly well, whilst the school and village stood round. Then the grown people went to our schoolroom and put Mr. Jones of Owen something in the chair—a farmer at the bottom of the village—who made a most excellent speech, really first-rate, and they all bore such testimony to the school : that they had dreaded their coming ; that they soon found their mistake ; that no boy had ever done an ill action. They seemed particularly struck that they had never laughed at any one ; and if the people of Uppingham did not treat us well, they were proud of us. Altogether my heart felt strong within me as I heard the witness borne to

the true life. And I was particularly struck all through, that though the room was full, and in fact it was a complete village gathering, neither inside nor out was there an unseemly act in word or deed. There was complete refinement, no vulgarity, no exaggerated language, but simple, powerful, really good thinking, no speaker showing any vanity or false shame, but speaking in the most genuine way. It was very striking, and it has made me very proud, and happy, and strong within. And, indeed, I wanted strength at the thought of leaving this place and the many troubles that are still round one. . . . Just come in from dismissing the school. I made, thanks to Borth and last night, as effective a speech, I think, and one as likely to last in a living way, as I ever made in my life. And so this grand page of life is turned, and never more do we tread this shore as a school. It is a thought full of sadness to me, the having to go, full also of grateful relief at our having finished in so noble a way on the whole this eventful year of trial. I praise Thee, O God, I acknowledge Thee to be the Lord! O Lord, have mercy upon us!

*April 13th.*—The boys gone, the page turned, the chapter come to an end. How thankful I am. With so many possibilities of evil, so many cankers, so many conceivable accidents. But it has been glorious. . . . The people sang a farewell to the boys this morning. I feel as in a dream; it has been so strange, and is so strange, such a mixture of good and evil. The good, however, most living and strong, the evil shadowy fears, yet sorrow for leaving this place is no shadow. . . .

*April 25th (Uppingham).*—Home yesterday with wonderfully mixed feelings. Thankfulness to God most at a great page closed and turned; intense dislike to the place, mixed with a feeling of home and being master once more in my own house; the old constriction of stomach and feeling of dread, mixed with a sense of no longer being at the mercy of others, and subject to the racket and disturbance of hotel life. . . . What a strange bit of life it is! how the goodness of those village people has been everything to us, and a light shining out in many lands! Such is a life seed.

*May 3rd.*—A clear week gone by, and very natural it

seems. How strange, how exceeding strange habit is, and the power of habit. All things go on in their familiar track, and the mere familiarity makes them easy, yet I trust there is a great move. The town is really making a grand demonstration : arches and flags all up in the street, and they must have taken much time and care and spent much money in doing it. This calling out of feeling and drawing attention to the school, and creating an interest or deepening it, is a new start in life here internally as well as externally. It is also a signal refutation of the calumnies vented on us last year, and the whole moral atmosphere of the place will, without doubt, be changed in future. . . .

*May 7th.*—The reception on Saturday night was even better than on Friday, and the whole town was in a wonderful fervour of enthusiasm. Whatever deductions have to be made, a new world has come out in this week, and all the position is altered. For such demonstrations produce the feeling as they go on, and are at the same time a great public pledge forbidding retreat.

And so the year of exile at Borth passed into the fixed traditions of Uppingham School. Congratulations poured in upon the "mobilising headmaster" from many sides.

"I must send you," writes the head of another great school, "a few words of heartiest congratulation on your return to Uppingham. In my judgment, your exodus was one of the bravest exploits ever performed, and you deserve to be hung all over with Victoria Crosses, and so I believe you will be in the world of immortal achievements."

"I think your move to Borth one of the pluckiest and noblest deeds I ever heard of, and I am very thankful that God has crowned it with such success," was the message from the head of an Oxford college.

The signal flags, which at Borth, on account of the stretches of noisy sea-beach along which the boys

wandered in play, took the place of a bell to mark school hours, were brought back, and now, like the battle flags of a regiment, hang in the Chapel to remind Uppingham boys of this striking episode in their school's history. They are indeed mementoes of a soldierly feat. A military man wrote to Thring :—

“ I have always thought that one of the most striking episodes in all school history was the great exodus of Uppingham to Borth. . . . It was one that strongly appealed to me as an old staff officer who had had to deal with the movement of troops on a large scale. I always felt that the operation was akin to a large military one, full of difficulty really, and dependent for success on the nicest organisation.”

A little volume of verse, *Borth Lyrics*, embodies some of Thring's thought about this eventful year. There is in it little note of exultation at the success he had achieved. It was characteristic that his thought turned rather to self-examination.

After the return it was determined to have an annual commemoration service for the great deliverance of the school. The chaplain, Mr. Christian, together with Mr. Mullins and Mr. Skrine, had been appointed to arrange the service and select for it the lessons, psalms, etc. When they submitted their selections to the headmaster he at once said : “ You must put in the 30th Psalm ”; and he went on to explain that just before the fever outbreak, so strong was his conviction that what had been built up could never be shaken, he had practically applied to himself the sixth verse of that psalm : “ And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be removed ; Thou, Lord, of Thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong.”

Thenceforward as long as he lived, year by year, at

the Commemoration Service, he recalled to boys and masters the events of the year at Borth as a proof that God had saved the school that it might do His work in the world.

"There was a day," he says in one of these commemoration sermons, "when our eyes looked on these great walls, and we doubted whether we should ever worship here again. Utter ruin had come, utter and absolute to the life here. We had to go out and, in the sight of all the world, live or die as a school. Few know, very few know, what it is, day by day, to see the giant deadly force of irresistible, invisible ruin drawing closer and closer, and to look straight in the face of overwhelming evil power. There was a day when the school here in this place had come to an end, and when, unless the great venture came out right, all the life we had stored up here was lost; and the good cause, the cause of Christ, which had been our hope here in striving to give each boy true justice in work and play, 'none favouring, none forgetting,' had perished from this hillside. You know it ended in deliverance. Lo! we are here to-day. But that great deliverance is David's second reason for his faith. Christ the Deliverer has delivered this school, and gave it safety at Borth in that dread year, even as David had been saved. Then, as soldiers in the army of the living God like him, and like him, too, holding a life saved by a special deliverance such as has never happened to any school at any time, we are bound to stand faithful and true; to stand here on our hill, in this our chapel fortress, with the schoolroom at its side—twin fortress homes, the one of holy worship, the other of the work made holy, one great building of God's truth, though two, each upholding the other—we are bound, I say, to stand fast; we are bound to go out from here, calm and confident that none who defies the armies of the living God shall conquer. Sons of the chosen people of England, with its eight hundred years of the shield of God to look to, and with a great deliverance that has made that shield our own, we stand here to do God's will and live or die for Him. Let there be no cowards here."

And again in another sermon:—

In one week's time this present school would have been no more. By the end of one week I, who now speak to you, and others with me would have been taking their last looks of these walls, never more to set foot within them again, and all our life here would have been scattered and gone. I can never forget how the place looked to eyes dim with thoughts like these—eyes that saw all too clearly, and yet as in a vision saw what seemed passing away. You may forget, men may not believe—yea, as time goes on the story may be scorned, and the words that tell it sound fantastic and feverish and unreal. Be it so; but let none who has not tried think he knows.

One thing is certain, whatever we felt, this school came to its end; and even as it ended the deep waters parted, and it was saved, and it is here.

It is certain also that a great deliverance, whether of a man or of a society, is a great claim on the life that is saved.

The Israelites carried with them a grand inheritance of holiness and truth. They were saved because of it. As a nation they betrayed it.

I do claim also for this school, that the very deliverance is a grand inheritance for those who come after: a certainty that a truth, which God thought worthy of delivering, is here; a certainty that it is entrusted with a special mission of life, with a precious germ of holy work which it is bound to carry on. That year at Borth stands alone in the history of schools.

As long as these walls rise in their strength, so long will they plead with those who worship here: plead with those who were cast out and brought back again, with them and their descendants for ever; plead for the price that ought to be paid, the price of the life that was given back, the truth and the purity that shall show they were worthy of deliverance, the honest, active power of the sons of a great inheritance, of sons who remember ever that a great gift is a claim for a great future, and that destruction, when it is a resurrection, is a passing from lower to higher life.

Do not betray your life. The school died and is alive again. Do not betray that life.

## CHAPTER XIII

### AFTER BORTH

1878-1886

THE year at Borth had been to Thring a period of acute anxiety, but his cares were mingled with keen enjoyment and deep satisfaction. His school machinery had stood admirably the extraordinary strain put upon it. The system established by years of painful endeavour had proved adequate to meet a great and unexpected crisis. Besides this, the year of exile had appealed to all his soldierly qualities—to those sides of his character which often made his friends regret that he had not chosen a military career. On the whole, it may be doubted if he ever passed a happier year of school life than that spent at Borth, though he had gone forth from Uppingham holding as it were his life in his hand ; and though the issue of the enterprise long hung in doubtful balance. The freedom of the long line of coast in front of Borth, and of the splendid hill country behind, the bracing air of sea and mountain, the more bracing atmosphere of daring enterprise in which he moved, all gave him a health and buoyancy which he had not known for years before. So we find that it was almost with regret that he returned to the

familiar but comparatively inglorious routine of life at Uppingham.

He had still much to think about. The troubles of migration did not end with the actual campaign. When Thring decided upon removal, the main body of his trustees had given but a half-hearted assent to the enterprise. Their official resolution sanctioned the breaking up of the school; they knew nothing of it (this was the theory expressed by one of their number) till its return. Now that the school was saved and was back in its old home, the question arose whether the masters should be recouped from the funds of the Trust for the large expenses incurred at Borth. It is not easy, and it is perhaps useless to disentangle the threads of a dispute which ended in an appeal to the Charity Commissioners. The reply of the commissioners showed that they had no doubt on the question. It says: "Although the removal of the school to Borth had not the express sanction of the Trustees, yet their subsequent acquiescence in it must be assumed from the absence of any disavowal, from the part they took in the management of the school during the time of its stay at Borth, and from the fact that contributions were made by them out of the Trust funds for purposes connected with its removal.

"The expenditure therefore to which the attention of the commissioners has been called must, in their opinion, be regarded as a liability incurred in the administration of the Trust, and one therefore which may properly be met in some way out of the resources of the school."

It was some time before Thring was entirely relieved of the large financial responsibility which he had been forced to assume in order to carry through his

bold policy for the salvation of the school. It was a period of much anxiety.

*February 12th, 1878.*—It is very strange how all my life I am to be in money difficulties. Just as I had really a breath of freedom, and was for once quite square, came the scheme and Borth, and knocked me back into debt again. My bank book shows a deficit of some £3000, and I know not where to retrench save in Ben Place and the summer holidays. That must be given up as soon as possible. I always think we live expensively, yet as headmaster I do not well see how to cut down any important item. I do believe that the how to face money difficulties in a good cause is modern martyrdom. But then it is a subtle thing to judge whether one's own personal self-indulgence is not the cause of the pain, though quite certain that there would have been plenty of money if the good cause had been betrayed.

To his money difficulties was added another which touched upon what was to him the most vital of school principles.

*February 16th.*—The Trustees have had to acknowledge the Borth expenses, but have sent an answer through me in which they have, without consulting me (as the scheme enjoins), recommended taking more boys, and thrown in a pretty firebrand amongst my subordinates. Luckily I have now some staunch friends, and the majority are not mutinous. It will have the effect, however, once more of showing them and every one in their true colours, and of bringing out and proclaiming on the housetop the principles on which this school has been built up, which they are now trying to pull down. How strangely different all this is from what one once pictured to one's self in case the work prospered, and we lived to see it! How much greater the blessing has been on the spirit life, how much keener the pain, how endless! Yet—

Be the day weary or be the day long,  
At length it ringeth to evensong.

Against any increase in the number of boys to be

taken into the houses and the school Thring vehemently protested. In a letter addressed to the Board he reviews the growth of the school, reaffirms his claim that a strict limitation of numbers is essential to true work, urges that "the Trustees should so arrange the payment of the headmaster as not to make it his interest to destroy the school by raising the numbers above this limit," that it was "also important that the assistant masters should not be advised to destroy the school by taking extra boarders," and concludes by throwing the responsibility for any such action upon the Board.

"Whatever difference there may be on this or that point, the school takes rank among the first in England. It is now in the hands of the Trustees to make or unmake. The times have been full of trouble. For five years or so before the scheme came in force, impending changes made any movement from within impossible. Thus there were five years of inaction with all their arrears of improvements to be made and expenses to be met. Then came the heavy losses and dangers of the typhoid crisis which might well have brought an older school to ruin. That is past, and my responsibility is past also.

"The task is entrusted to you of carrying on a work which, through good and evil days, has steadily advanced up to the present time." He appealed for support to the Charity Commissioners.

*May 7th.*—My petition has gone to the Charity Commissioners. Jacob approved greatly of it, and said it was a capital document, and we are now sending out seventy or eighty of it in good quarters. It is a manifesto, the first time I have opened my mouth freely at all in five-and-twenty years. I am very curious to see what the men say who receive it. It will be a considerable test of the characters. How little men

in power think they are being judged when they pass judgment ! It is like the gospel invitation to the great supper very often, the judges pass sentence on themselves.

On this occasion the assistant masters heartily joined Thring in protesting against any increase of numbers as an interference with the central feature of the Uppingham system. This support, given at a time when almost all the men had been greatly straitened by the successive disasters which had befallen the school, gave him the most unbounded satisfaction, as proving how firm a root his principles had taken.

As the true alternative to the policy which had been proposed, he now used all his influence to secure from the Charity Commissioners permission to make such an increase of school fees as would place the masters in a satisfactory financial position. This point he finally carried, thus saving his principle without unduly sacrificing the interests of his masters.

He took the first opportunity that offered to publicly recognise the stand taken by his colleagues, by referring, at the next prize-giving, to "the great honour to the masters of having proclaimed the creed of not increasing numbers in the time of their sore need," and to his own pride in their action.

It need not be said that the triumphant return of the school from Borth placed Thring in a new relation to Uppingham. The little town had learned the value to itself of the school and its headmaster. He took advantage of the kindlier feeling which prevailed in the place to carry out many plans which he had long entertained. He had always felt that a great public school given up to the culture of the richer classes, and drawing together a large body of highly cultivated men and women, should make itself a centre of light

and helpfulness to the community in which its work was done.

He was elected President of the Mutual Improvement Society of the town, and threw himself into its plans with characteristic energy. Instructive or amusing lectures, classes in singing, music, and drawing, in literature, cookery, and sewing, were all planned or carried out under his direction or advice. Cricket and tennis clubs and other means of recreation he helped to organise, in the belief, often expressed, that to give healthful recreation to those who had least of it, was one of the most Christian works to which people's attention could be turned in this busy, mechanical, and often overstrained age. Some of his letters at this period illustrate the spirit with which he entered into this exchange of friendly offices with his townspeople.

To E. F. BENNETT.

*January 26th, 1880.*

I shall very gladly give you any information.

I do not think the work requires any special influence.

It is based on two or three common-sense principles, and is calculated to work well under very ordinary circumstances.

First of all, though religion is the sole aim and object of it, I have nothing to do with religion in it. We have all been a deal too religious. I mean we have all been trying to get up to heaven without a staircase; the drawing-room in our house is splendid, but it wants stairs, and the stairs have nothing whatever to do with the inside drawing-room life. Recreation is my object, combining good amusements with good interests and culture.

The name is important: "Mutual Improvement Society" is a good name. Several times members have appealed to the name to prove that they would not do a low thing, and I have appealed to them publicly to be true to it.

Now the whole backbone of such work as we are doing here consists in having a little good regular teaching on an attractive subject, the more of course the better, but if you have not got that it is no use trying to do anything of this kind. We also keep trying to employ people in good games, cricket, football, lawn tennis, chess, draughts, etc. Music and drawing are the most attractive of all subjects, music far above everything else. A good choral society learning really good music is quite enough for ordinary purposes. But then the music must be good, I mean of the highest kind ; nothing has been so successful here as oratorio music. I cannot but think any neighbourhood can furnish teachers if you do not demand too much from them. Our main work only lasts four months of the year. I mean the lectures and other classes ; the only thing the year through—that is, barring sixteen weeks' holidays—is the choral class. Then you must not get bad lecturers ; any well-informed gentleman can talk on his own subject well, and a man should not deliver more than one lecture a year, unless specially circumstanced, and any subject will do in good hands.

This is really all. A sound backbone of real regular teaching, united with as much good amusement as possible, and with a total and entire absence of any attempt to pull in religion.

In management, I just *manage*. We meet as equals, and have very pleasant committee meetings ; I never patronise, but just discuss with them and sum up as one of themselves . . .

TO REV. EDWARD WHITE.

April 14th, 1880.

Remember in music, it is the only thing which all nations, all ages, all ranks and both sexes do equally well. It is therefore sooner or later the great world bond, the secular gospel, and that is why, though pitifully unmusical, I set such store on it. But I have been bold enough in our feast week in June to have a band playing every night on the cricket field, and dancing, and it has been thoroughly successful and

decorous. You omit, perhaps only in thought as being to you impracticable, that great power "acting" and the stage. Now in the Christmas holidays you may see me dancing nearly every night, and these last two years my family have got up theatricals and given a rehearsal to many of our town neighbours, and an evening to our friends. Now if acting, or still better, "acted readings," were universal, then you have a power for good incalculable. I don't want to leave acting to the devil a bit more than dancing. Good acting is the most literary thing in the world, the most living instiller of new thought and bright brain power possible. I want my children and my boys to know and feel that nothing is unchristian but want of self-control. The philosopher says, "A dangerous beast—human nature—a kicker, a bolter, a very devil; don't let him go out for a walk, for goodness sake."

Christ says, "A noble, a divine creature is human nature, learn to ride, put him to his speed, spur him to his noblest leaps, but ride him." . . .

We may now turn once more to the diary to follow the current of his school work and thought.

*May 16th.*—On Monday our Borth commemoration; £35 : 18s. collected, a real collection. Skrine wrote a hymn, and David composed the music; this was a great thing, as it gave a school life to it apart from me, and had no doubt great effect. I preached and made an historical statement, as well as a religious, and was asked to print it, which I am doing, as it is a contribution to a very remarkable time for school life. Altogether the day went off very well, and made a strong impression, I think. . . .

*February 16th, 1879.*—Holy Communion to-day. The worst attendance I ever recollect. My heart sinks to think that the school is no longer religious as it used to be; I felt that to-day. I suppose now the upward struggle has ceased; they are being drawn into the school *world* and will imitate the fashionable vices. "We will be as the nations, as the families of the Gentiles, and serve wood and stone," and forget the pride in truth and trustfulness. Partly to a wave

of non-religion and modern non-thought beginning with—, I think, and certainly culminating in—, has been passing over us. Partly also and worst by far the intermittent confirmations, with their long intervals, tell heavily against the school life.

*February 23rd.*—David came in in the afternoon, and has been at me to write a series of Borth Songs. I shall try and do it. Had a very interesting talk with him about our town work. He is going to give a music master's concert, a Monday popular once a month, and see if we cannot touch the neighbourhood. I am quite sensible of the much greater interest that is flowing into my life from these things. I thank God for it. All comes in His good time. I think over three hundred of our parents having paid the advanced terms without a word, all those already in the school doing it voluntarily, is a greater fact, if possible, than the following us to Borth . . .

I pray we may be kept full of life. When I think of the dictum that has gone forth, that fifteen years is as much as a headmaster can do without rusting, and find, so to say, eternity not too long for the human work of school done in our common humanity, teaching, that is, dealing with the minds and hearts, not lecturing, which is dealing with subjects with logical clearness; when I think how day by day some growth seems to be, something new, and we hardly appear yet to have begun to get true principles on foot, I marvel at the fifteen years' dictum and the blindness out of which it came. God gives us hearts and work for eternity ever new in living power.

*June 14th.*—A fine day. I felt very weary. There is such incessant knocking, and not least the confirmation with all its work, and all its anxiety. To-night I had in the confirmation candidates, sixty-two or sixty-three. Not so many as we ought to have, but our religious life suffers greatly by our not having a fixed annual confirmation. I am so thankful, though, at being able to speak to them and give to them a solemn warning against uncleanness of all kinds. They shall not sin blindly. On Monday I shall have in those who have been previously confirmed, and on Tuesday all the unconfirmed. So no boy in the school will be left in ignorance.

May God keep us in these evil days. It is a sore trial. Now to bed thankful that another week is past. Yea,

Though it blow or cold or hot,  
The work goes on and slacketh not.

*June 15th.*—Very wet all the morning, fortunately it held up a little before three when the confirmation was. . . . The service was very striking. The bishop made an excellent address as usual, and the burst of singing was thrilling. Seventy-six, I find, were confirmed. I feel so thankful at having this day over. It has been a high day and holy to the school, I think. The strain is off me now, for a while now it is over.

*June 16th.*—Have had in all the communicants, with two or three of the elder boys who are Nonconformists, to-night, and spoke plainly to them of the deadly sin. I feel so thankful at having warned and advised them. May God bless it and pour His Holy Spirit on us.

*June 18th.*—This morning in Essington's book I found a kind of sonnet to me, which gratified me very much, as it exactly took the one point in my life which has made my work tell, the never allowing any other thing, however tempting, to interfere with it.<sup>1</sup> . . .

*Sept. 23rd.*—Back from Borth after a happy time, though less diversified than usual on account of the bad weather. We had our usual friendly greetings and welcomes, and I cannot feel grateful enough for the twelve years following of happy summer holidays we have now had. To-night I will only thank God, who for twenty-six years has shielded my head, and who will still shield it. As I was coming from

<sup>1</sup> THE KING OF BOYS.

A scholar reared beside the Thames and Cam  
Built up an Eton at his Uppingham.  
Whence this success? To make all teaching real  
Was, with this King of Boys, life's beau-ideal;  
So, though his bow had many strings, this one  
He plied, this always. Thus his work was done,  
This made him famous. All should learn from Thring  
That he does well, who does his life's one thing.

R. W. ESSINGTON.

Seaton to-night, thinking how I had been taken to Borth and brought back in safety, the sense of God's power round about comforted me greatly in my fear for the coming term. Θεῷ δόξα.

*Sept. 27th.*—I held the masters' meeting, and read the examiners' report. There was little to say about the classical part of it, the main judgment on which, though very nastily expressed, was decidedly good, but there was a severe condemnation of the mathematics. . . . Now came the real gist of the matter. I prefaced my judgment by saying that there were two reasons which made this a very special time to us: the first, that six or seven years of intense strain and unsettlement, first from the scheme and secondly from the fever, had just come to an end, and that it was idle to suppose that the school, either masters or boys, had gone through such a trying period without strain, which had both made weak points, and discovered them when existing; and, secondly, that the great depression in trade made it very important to examine our ship well, and see whether it was seaworthy, and that we should as a body be able to present a sound bold front; that I felt sure that the old principles zealously worked would save us from harm. After this preface I proceeded to condemn in very strong terms the inaccuracy in reading, writing, and pronouncing words, which I said was so widespread as to have become a school canker, and that it had grown worse and worse, and must be put an end to. . . .

*October 18th.*—The resolutions of the trustees in to-day and the money paid. . . . Now if I was but out of debt there would be no great weight left on working life. How strange it all is! once the work seemed the trial and the weight, and to do the work well the great object of life. Yet for years, not the doing work well, but the being hewn and carved into a greater work one's self has been life. Not what I have done, but what has been done to me has been God's will and training. And faith in the unseen rather than the doing, even what had to be done has been the lesson.

*October 23rd.*—Saw to-day in the *Guardian*, the death of Bishop Chapman, my first tutor at Eton, a man who will not have the credit due to him of being the only schoolmaster of his day who admitted the idea of teaching each boy into his

horizon, and tried manfully and skilfully to do it under impossible circumstances.

*October 24th.*—I explained what I meant about criticism by saying I respected the fools above all things in forming a judgment, but not after. The fools were most powerful, and I quoted the story of Lord Shelburne consulting old Lord So-and-So always, because after a talk with him he knew what every fool in the country would say about his measures, also Henry's fierce injunction to me to get the misprint on the cover of my *Porson*, "which every fool understood," altered at once, saying it had rung in my head ever since. That I never did anything without having spent weeks or months, or sometimes years, in considering the questions, especially in the light of what the fools would say. . . .

*November 22nd.*—This morning I received a letter from Birmingham saying that a Professor Felmeri from Transylvania, who had been sent to England by the Hungarian Ministry to inspect and report on schools, would visit me to-day, which he has accordingly done. . . . I think this will really have some power in getting true ideas out. He is shrewd and observant, to judge by what he says of what he has seen. It is strange in the same week these two school investigations coming to me.

*December 7th.*—Had a meeting yesterday at Bagshawe's, and settled the schedules of the lower part of the school. May God bless this our work. I feel greatly comforted at getting some hold on the work again. The slight depression in the entries is a thing to be grateful for, as it has brought masters to their senses, and made them ready to obey. Altogether, in the six-and-twenty years I have been here I have never felt so clear, so hopeful as now. I trust to be able to establish a St. Luke's summer before my winter comes.

*December 14th.*—Preached my last sermon to-day. Never since I have been here, never in six-and-twenty years, have I spent the last Sunday of any term in peace like this. I can thank God to-night, and I do thank God from a full heart, for having given me peace, even if it be for the time only, peace in my borders, no great evil in sight, no mutiny able to shake the whole fabric, no enemy from without menacing the school, but peace and hope. Θεῷ δόξα.

*March 1st, 1880.*—Went to Cambridge on the 28th. The vice-provost, Austin Leigh, put me up in my old rooms. I had not slept in the bed for thirty years, and as I woke in the morning this seemed the dream, and Uppingham, wife, and children all a delusion, and I lying there with all my life before me to begin. I was strangely conscious that in feeling there had been no change whatever in those thirty years. I felt just as eager, fresh, and, in fact, exactly the same. . . .

*April 4th.*—It is one of the bits of disinterested upholding of good for its own sake that I have known, and I prize it wonderfully. If those who have higher and truer views would show them, how different the world would be. Or rather, if persons would not so blur the lines between good and evil in practice, how different the world would be.

*April 8th.*—Been appalled to-night at the amount of bills to pay. May God have mercy on me, and either take this lifelong burden off or give me more power to bear it. It grips my stomach in the old way so that I was sick again to-night, which I have not been for a long time. It is a grievous thing to be so worked and busy as to be unable to look to one's own affairs, and yet to have a very large circle of necessary expenditure.

*June 23rd.*—After twelve Schlottmann came up and gave me a lecture on my policy and behaviour, the gist of which was that I ought to be more autocratical in action and less in manner. I fear there is a great deal of truth in the last statement. I have such a hunted life, and am so worried on points on which my whole existence has been staked all these trying years, that I fear my manner is far too earnest and decisive. I am very grateful to Schlottmann, for it was the work of a real friend done in a real friend's spirit, and few would care to do so disagreeable a task.

*July 30th.*—Bagshawe to-day came to me and thanked me in the most feeling way for all he had learnt under me; he said when he spoke to me about teaching I breathed a new spirit into him, and his life here had been full of training and progress. I told him how much I valued what he said, that he cheered me amazingly, that I had poured out my very blood for years seemingly to no purpose, but that now I really

felt a new life was coming into the place, and I no longer wished to go as I had done if I could have left without deserting a post which I felt was given me. This is very cheering to me. It was most touching, too, on Wednesday night to hear my upper sixth telling me, sundry of them, "how happy they had been here, *especially in my division*," scarcely able to speak for coming tears. When I think how I slang them sometimes I feel half inclined to laugh, half to cry, at their affection, but indeed there is much affection between us. And now God keep me and mine these holidays, and increase our power of work. Amen.

*December 11th.*—A strange feeling of rest in the midst of cares, as a man might feel lying on a moss bank in a bramble brake after having been plunging through it. There is, too, a strangely solemn feeling of blessing come on the work, of true progress, and overshadowing wings. Even if it be for a time only, I have peace in my borders, no great evil in sight, nothing able to shake the whole fabric, no enemy from without menacing the school, but peace and hope. Praise God.

*Christmas Day.*—It was very strange being at Eton. I had not been there for twenty-seven years since I was last there as poser. Young of Sherborne and Butler of Harrow were at the Provost's. Joynes dined there, and I sat next old Dupuis, eighty-four years of age. Durnford was at dinner also. Carter and Mrs. Carter, whom I have not seen since I was in Italy with Henry on my first travels, I believe. The whole scene was to me weird and dreamlike in that strange, weird room of old days.

*January 11th, 1881.*—To-night as I was thinking over some of my sermons, owing to an observation in a letter to me, it suddenly struck me how years ago I had felt as if I should like to go out into the world as a missionary of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Life; well, it suddenly struck me how all these years I have been, according to my powers, such a missionary, and that God has chosen me, unknown to myself, to do it. Oh may He carry me to the end.

*January 25th.*—I see clearly had we succeeded earlier that the whole life would have gone out of the place,—indeed, it was almost gone out of the place, I felt it to be,—and the

school have become a mean commercial scramble ; but now that the shadow of death has been on us all, and the great obstructions removed, I trust the resurrection time has come, and that my feelings are part of the resurrection life. May God bless and keep us, and make us true missionaries of the Holy Spirit. This morning I was greatly delighted by hearing that little Francis Harmon, who was ill last term, burst into tears at seeing his brothers coming back to school because he was not yet allowed to go. Truly to have drawn tears from a little boy's eyes because he could not come back to school is something worth having lived for, when I think what bitter tears I shed at having to go back at his age.

*May 26th.*—This afternoon the Coffee Tavern opened. It is very nice, and has every prospect of doing well, I think, from what I hear. At all events this earnest effort throughout all England to make the life of the poor more cheery is very striking and full of hope. I let loose the idea of decorating the National schoolrooms, and making them places of eye education.

*June 9th.*—This morning unusually pleasant letters. One from Brind in India, very pleasant, with £6 life subscription to the Old Boys' Society for himself and brother. One from Percival, Trinity, Oxford, asking me to take an evening sermon at St. Mary's next term at the special services held for the men. . . . Pleased at the recognition, it gives me confidence. Then I had a most cheering letter from Mrs. Marriott, sister of the two Gibsons who used to be here, entering her *five* sons, speaking of the way her brothers always talked of our work here, and her own admiration of her brothers' characters. I do not know that I ever had a more delightful morning's post. I had on Tuesday a very nice letter from the Bishop of Oxford, quite in the old friend's style. I have answered it in the same strain ; it will be curious if we meet at Borth. . . .

Altogether I feel a new life. The days no longer drag full of fear and ever-watchful expectation of treachery and evil. I almost feel buoyancy. It is another world. I can scarcely believe the new security and peace. I now have time to work and think of work instead of being hunted like a wild beast. Thank God.

*June 26th.*—I am surprised beyond measure at the result of the cultured family. There he is full of thought, interest, and true and noble views of life, not a bit priggish, holding his own steadily but gently, asking the most intelligent questions, and expressing the most striking opinions. I am fairly astonished. I really have very seldom met so intelligent a companion, and yet he is not strong in knowledge, and in school decidedly on the whole mild.

*July 2nd.*—I had a glorious bit of spiritual comfort that day; — came in; he had left much suspected by me and implicated in some evil. He is now a clergyman, and he came to say he had often written to me, but always torn up the letters, and now he did not know how to speak. I told him he need not speak, it was written on his face that he had risen to higher things; and after some comforting talk to both of us, when he got up to go, he stood with tears in his eyes, and said “he owed his life to me, and all he hoped for and was.” Truly it is worth living for to have but one such witness. Thank God for it. . . .

*July 3rd.*—The more I think it over the more I am struck with the new world in which I now live, and the blessings that are being made visible to me. This week has been so rich in varied bits of comfort, and there is no jarring note. One moves amongst the masters so secure and at ease, and not on the watch any more for the next plot or stab. Tuck preached a good, manly sermon yesterday.

*July 4th.*—Tylden came in with Marie as I was sitting in the shade, and began talking philosophy, and set me going. I think I have given him something to ponder for many a day. He is worth talking to. I could not help being struck to-day that for the first time since I have been at Uppingham I have been able, as it were, this term to sit down and look at the work and take in some of that new creation of happier life and power which God has permitted me and Marie to create in this school and town.

*September 19th.*—Back from Borth to-day. Scarce two hours here, and yet Borth and the holidays might be a thousand miles away already, so strange is this marvellous life. It is like awaking from a dream. But which is the dream and which is the waking, God only knows. Every day more and

more makes shadowy all I ever thought or knew, all I once thought I could judge. The only thing that stands fast is the pressing onward to strive to serve Christ. Though what is Christ's service, plain enough in my own case, becomes more and more doubtful to me in the case of others. These holidays, wet and uneventful as they have been, have been the most restful to me of any that I have ever passed. Our stay at the hotel answered on the whole perfectly. I finished my translation of Agamemnon to my great pleasure, though I cannot afford to publish it. I have also rewritten the first four chapters of *Life Science*, which, please God to grant me health and inspiration, in two or three years I hope may be ready for the press. Then the Bishop of Oxford, my old school friend Mackarness, with all his family, spent six weeks at Borth, and we renewed our old ties, and all of us were delighted with his family. Mrs. Mackarness is particularly pleasant and attractive. Things at Borth go on gradually. We opened the Uppingham Path which connects the shore with the hills, and I have had four seats put up, three with inscriptions to perpetuate our memory. This pleased me much, besides being a great boon both to visitors and country people.

*October 14th.*—I have lately had brought home to me in a very strong form a truth which has been in my mind many years, of the utter vanity of writing histories of complicated things, until I begin to hope that no one will write the history of this school and me. . . . I can see how the moment truth is told, all the old evil will rise in self-defence and repeat the old lies; and the white-washers, who do not want anything to be very good or very bad, will be busy to reduce the fresco and the mouldiness on the wall to the same colour, and not least, any contortions or mistakes done by the man on the rack will be set down as his blemishes, whilst those who racked him escape. It is easy to be calm when you twist your neighbour to death, and men being twisted to death do not act with exactly the same power that belongs to them when at ease. The power may be very great, but it is all used up in simply bearing the pain at all, but little is left to work with. Then, again, who can tell all that process of growth in life and casting off delusions which result from the crucifixion of the lower self?

*October 16th.*—A beautiful day. Finished my course of sermons to the school to-day. They mark a new era. I know not how, but hitherto I have felt to a great degree, “How can I sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” so cruel and hard did the tyranny and lying-in-wait press on my spirit. This term God has given me a new power, and to-day in giving the school a cause and a standard I quite felt before I went into chapel that as I did so God’s angel would fling out the folds of the banner all unseen in the chapel, and at the appeal to the truth of the stupid and backward, the standard would be planted and the great flag stream out. I think I shall never see or think of the chapel again without in spirit seeing the angel’s standard floating there.

*October 28th.*—A satisfactory day. Moreover, a revelation of Scripture truth about God the Holy Ghost has shaped itself, and been borne in my mind to-day, a truth which has been flitting near me for some years, but to-day has become a living presence with me. I thank God.

*November 8th.*—Came back from Cuddesdon yesterday, after a pleasant day as far as Cuddesdon was concerned, but I never feel quite at ease when away during term time even on duty. Got into Oxford at 1.35 on Saturday. Called on Boyd, Harper, whom I saw for half a minute, Miss Wordsworth, and as they were all out, I had time to spend an hour at Dr. Acland’s before driving over to Cuddesdon. A beautiful day on Sunday; had a chat with Canon Furse, whom I had not seen for forty years, and a very pleasant walk with Charles Mackarness, and Bertie and King and Sarah and Daisy Mackarness. Then in the evening was driven into Oxford for the sermon. I was extremely struck with the congregation; the great church was full of men, whereas I had thought that if the ground floor was filled it would be a good congregation. I know I had something to say to them, so whether my sermon was a popular one or not I felt the message would reach some. Next morning came in with the Bishop and Mrs. Mackarness by 2 P.M., and had a long talk with Miss Wordsworth, and went over Lady Margaret Hall, and started home at 4.35.

*November 29th.*—My birthday, a happy day; yesterday my blind lecturer, Mr. Marston, came in the middle of the day,

and was a most interesting guest, and gave us a most telling lecture. The school was quite taken, and when the iron was hot I struck, and suggested as he had before spoken to me of a scholarship of £30 per annum from the school to the Blind College. This morning I got a very nice birthday letter from Mr. Birley, reminding me how seven years ago at this time the hymn book came into existence on my birthday. I wrote back and told him of this gracious new birth of the scholarship, the first of the kind, as our mission in 1869 was the first of its kind.

*December 5th.*—Had a grateful letter from the Blind College. I am very thankful for that episode. Have for some time been thinking over making an appeal to the school to have a definite foreign mission, when I got a letter from Mrs. Christian, asking if I could not do anything to help her father, the Bishop of Brisbane. So I have been conferring with her, and hope to start something.

*December 25th.*—Back from Wellington yesterday, a successful Conference. They have got into the habit of doing the only thing that can make the Conference do good work, referring matters to the committee with large powers. In this way the committee collect information, and as true results of what the men really think is arrived at as is possible. . . .

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*March 29th, 1884.*—Received to-day from Felméri a translation of his account of Uppingham in the Hungarian Blue Book. It is exceedingly good; several of the great principles, moreover, are put very clearly.

*April 4th.*—This evening took leave of —, and on my charging him with disregarding my teaching and wasting his life, was much humiliated by his saying I frightened him so much he got into an utter muddle, and that he had tried his best. I told him I was very very sorry, but that he must learn to face the facts he had to deal with; that he always looked trifling, and was caught trifling too, and that a single word to me at any time would have had effect. But after all, I fear I have mismanaged the boy and it humbles me.

*May 10th.*—This day has brought solemn thoughts. My old tutor and friend, Goodford, Provost of Eton, is dead; the honestest man in work and character that modern Eton has produced, whose work, example, and life have done more to

keep sound whatever soundness there is in Eton than anything else amongst all the shams I have known there. I honour him.

*June 7th.*—I find it hard to feel sure that this disregard of money is quite right. But it is second nature when I get a man in earnest to back him and not to spare. God only knows the truth, and how far such spending is right.

*June 8th.*—This afternoon I have been looking over the old diary to recover the date of the chapel plans. I find the schoolroom plans came to me on Monday, 16th September 1861. I have been much comforted by reading it again. The way in which God has brought His work to pass, and that it is His work, and how one's heart was in it, and how it has grown, has come out so strongly as I read. I marvel how Marie and I ever lived through it. We should not have done so had not He upheld us in those fearful years. And yet as I read how dim and dull and commonplace the record seemed which, when written, was thrilling in my heart-strings quivering with pain, dropped in my life-blood on the page, and now it seemed all turned to common ink, excepting indeed the deep feeling of the great deliverance and a great work done.

*July 12th.*—The most astonishing thing has happened to-day. There has been a fellow named — at the school these eight years, an excellent good fellow, but so inaccurate through bad teaching, and apparent inability to fix his mind, that I have simply again and again given up his exercises in despair, doing nothing because I knew what a good fellow he was. Lately I have been able to give him some credit for trying in the right way. Well, that fellow has shown up the winning poem—full of tender, true feeling, and graceful diction. It is a marvellous triumph of goodness wakening into delicate power in him, and a marvellous reward to me for working at each boy hopefully. Thank God.

*July 18th.*—Nothing is more strange to me than the curious similarity of mind and body. Here am I, just like a fellow with a raw wound that cannot bear to be touched. I knew my bank book must show an improvement, and yet till I saw it the very thought of the account coming in made me ill. Things are better. It makes me laugh when the tercentenary accounts talk of my indomitable will. I should like to know where my indomitable will would have been had not some

little faith and God's Spirit upheld me. When I think what a coward I am, a self-contradictory coward, and how often I should have been done for, it does seem ridiculous. I suppose man must still talk in this way of man, but it is very little true.

During the summer holidays of this year he had come to the conclusion that it might be his duty to resign the headmastership of the school. The purpose had been floating in his mind for one or two years, and he now seems to have seriously entertained the idea for several months, and only gave it up on the earnest remonstrance of trusted friends.

*October 19th.*—Truly, what a peace-making all round this closing scene is: peace with all those who have only been mistaken, not malicious—peace with the trustees, peace with the masters, peace with the bishop, peace with the town. Lord, Thou wilt let Thy servant depart *in peace*, according to Thy word. It is very striking; day by day some new sign comes in and gives me grounds of faith.

*November 14th.*—To-day I have told Marie my intention of leaving this place in the summer. I am sure I am doing right in not hanging on, and that God has led me to the right time. . . . I had a little boy named — in to speak to who had been lying, and I spoke to him very seriously. When I had finished I held out my hand to him and he took it, and on my shaking hands and drawing him forward he fell on my neck weeping and kissed me, and I him. Now it is a glorious thing that wielding the power I do as the head of this great school, and being such a potentate, the hearts of the little boys in the school should some of them feel towards me so lovingly as to do this. I thank God for this sign that my work and life touch their hearts.

*Change of  
charge of  
headmaster*

*November 17th.*—I feel keenly what a trial my resignation must be. I have settled to abide absolutely by Sir G. Couper's, Jacob's, and Birley's decision in the matter, and I have written to all of them. This is a great relief to me. The only thing that I have felt strongly in this matter has



been, that whilst God in many ways, and in a thousand little particulars, has seemed to direct me to this point, I cannot persuade myself that without receiving as direct a dismissal or call as put me here I am right in leaving my post. I cannot persuade myself that I should not be leaving it without orders. Whether the thing seems to turn out well or ill, if I have orders, I am content. I cannot either feel any fear. Something upholds me and makes me think and feel that all will be well, however blind the future seems to be.

The opinion of those whom he consulted was entirely against his taking the step which he proposed. As he had no adequate means on which to retire, and as no preferment had even been offered him, I find it difficult to explain how he could at this period seriously entertain, as he certainly did, the idea of resignation. He seems to have been full of a simple faith that he would not be left without the means of support, if at the call of duty he resigned his post. More than one letter received about this time from friends of influence points out how overwhelming was the claim which he had established by his work upon those who had the bestowal of church preferment, and it is probable that he may have thought it likely that this claim would be considered. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that if his long service had then received the public recognition which it deserved, there did not exist the slightest reason why he might not have been spared for many years of happy and successful work. But the yoke of toil could not be thrown off. For the moment this brought him only happiness.

*November 19th.*—A great feeling of peace came over me at having settled not to resign. I had a letter from Sir George Couper that quite decided me. . . . I have all along had a strong misgiving whether I was doing right in leaving my post without positive orders, and this doubt being set at rest is a

great relief. The peace I feel is quite the peace of doing right.

*November 28th.*—It is many years since I have felt so happy: never so happy—so free from care—I mean. God is bringing His work to a happy end for me and mine, I believe.

*November 29th.*—My birthday. A happy day. Particularly delighted with Skrine and David having presented me with two hymns for the beginning and end of term, instead of the mawkish things we now sing. Delighted too to see our school literature grow, and broaden its base. I trust very much to our literature in days to come keeping the school true to high principles and giving them *esprit de corps*.

*December 14th.*—It is astonishing how this term I have felt lifted up into a new world of power and feeling. It seems to me as if my prayer was directly and wonderfully answered, and a spirit breathed into me that gives me power to speak and new things to say, and the feeling of being a *προφήτης*, uncaring for the blame or praise of men. I believe God has given it. It is quite a new feeling to me.

*December 17th.*—Indeed, this term has lifted me into a new world of feeling and power in all ways. Never since my working life began have I felt so untroubled in money matters. Never have I felt so above my work, so full of higher power. God has surely touched my heart and lips.

*December 27th.*—A happy week over, with a happy Christmas Day. . . . I have been working quietly all the morning at my London Address, and feel happy about it. God has given me a message to deliver, and I feel it to be from Him.

*December 28th.*—It is wonderfully strange and interesting to me to watch the life unravelling like a drama written and acted before one. How one thing of life leads to another, and at the right moment all comes out in order. I marvel, and watch, and wait, and pray, and praise. How are the years that the “canker-worm” has spoilt being given back.

*December 31st.*—The last hour of the old year. It has been an eventful year to me, and it closes for the first time since I have been at Uppingham with a feeling of peace. Thank God for this. Strange to say, the impression on my mind is, that I am about to begin a new life instead of being at the close of life. There is much of new interest and new

work which I feel I can do unravelling out of the former life and work. I am re-writing *Theory and Practice* with great interest.

*March 18th, 1885.*—What a glorious gift to the English race Gordon's life is! For me I feel raised and cheered infinitely. It is such an incarnation of the Holy Spirit as He wished it to be, and coming in this age of cant and science it is like a revelation in our land. Sent off *Theory and Practice* to-day. I am so thankful. God has given me to speak truth, and though in England it is a lost cause, yet who knows, and it helps and cheers workers, and betters such work as can be done. I thank God for His speech given to me.

*March 25th.*—The concert over; the best I suppose ever given by an English school, or at an English school. Joachim here, Ludwig, and Herr Korleck, the finest trumpeter in the world, who was brought over to play in the Albert Hall, and has only played here besides. Joachim told the boys that they did not know what pleasure and delight they had given him by their singing, and their feeling for such music as that of Bach and Handel. The whole thing was splendid. . . . I was delighted in talking with Joachim to find that he really and thoroughly likes coming here. He said, "I do so like to hear those children sing," and that he is astonished at David's success with them.

*May 14th.*—I have invited the Conference of Head-mistresses to meet at Uppingham in 1887 if I am alive and here. If the world is to get better education the women must do it. My heart is still full of my queen; the strangest mixture of joy and sorrow. One thing is of infinite power with me. I have touched the highest pinnacle of honour. Never shall I have such a glory of life as her life answering to and acknowledging me on her deathbed. And I prize it above all things as a call to care for nothing less holy, less pure—as half-opening the doors beyond the grave.

*June 15th.*—Miss M\_\_\_\_\_, head of the \_\_\_\_ High School, came in the afternoon, and I don't think we ever did a better bit of work than cheering and breathing life into that hard-worked, lonely-hearted woman. I rejoice in what we have been able to do. I think my queen would rejoice in it and deem our kindness to weary hard-worked women a noble

thing. I feel that to help women is specially to be loyal to her. . . . I have been so much struck lately with the contrast of my early years and now in prophecy. Then the prophet eye was Cassandra-like, seeing evil and no remedy. Now the prophet eye is of Christ seeing the great life-healing moving through the world, and being part of it.

*June 17th.*—Wrote to-day a formal invitation for the Conference of Headmistresses in 1887 if I am alive and here. . . . For me I more and more see that the legacy my queen has left me and the message of Christ through the events of last year is to help women, education, and purity. θεῷ δόξα. I am *Latus sorte mea*, however heavy-hearted at times or surface-sad.

*June 20th.*—Very weary to-night. All the travelling and the crowd of things sweeping through one's life combine with the heavy daily work. The widening interest in the outside educational world, . . . and the great questions of life make life very interesting, but very weary too sometimes. I do, however, rejoice in having taken into my heart *Latus sorte mea*. I trust, by God's help, never more to have strong desire for anything but the working in the best way. My heart is wonderfully at rest about my stay here now, and Paradise has become a great reality in this world of daily mysterious life and darkness.

*June 22nd.* — Educational correspondence increasing. Nothing is more strange to me than the way in which an inner world goes on regulating all the work and feelings, whilst the influences and messages which make that inner world and which it obeys never find outward expression of any kind to any one, and yet are supreme.

*June 24th.*—My book came to-day. It is very nicely turned out, and I am very pleased at getting it. There are some very penetrating truths in it which will slide in and break up in time many popular lies, and if accepted will inaugurate a new departure in mental treatment, and the estimate formed of mind. . . .

*June 25th.*—We have settled the tercentenary matters, and I have given my £200 for the decoration of the old school-room. So that is off my mind. . . .

*June 27th.*—Yesterday morning we had our Old Boys'

Society meeting. I took occasion to note in returning thanks for my chairmanship that the school mission was due to Mr. Foy. Lewis came up after and said that ought to be known. Haslam proposed putting in the south window of the school-room to commemorate the mission—the first in England—and Mr. Foy. I took up the notion and set it going at once. . . . I then went across to Rossiter and had a talk with him. He said it would cost £50. I gave him the order up to that sum and must take my chance of getting it. But I reckon it of vital importance to the school to have the school mission commemorated, and I like to give Mr. Foy his due. Walter Earle also deserves credit for having worked the matter. . . . The Borth songs were exceedingly appreciated on Thursday night. The school songs are an inheritance to the school.

*July 10th.*—A very hot day. I have been much struck to-night in walking on the grass terrace walk, which we so often paced in fear and anguish in early years, with the change in these last years, the two last especially, and now this evening I silently rejoice in the main current and results of life. *Latus sorte mea*; *Latus* in having been counted worthy to suffer, *Latus* in the deliverance which suffering has wrought. Surely I would not wish to live my life over again, but more surely still do I rejoice, being what I was, that Christ's great hand has fashioned me and through necessary pain made me a prophet of truth for Him. Well do I remember how, when I read Cassandra in my young-man days, I sadly thought Apollo still gave the fatal gift of seeing *was ich doch nicht wenden kann*, but now as a prophet of Christ I rejoice in the prophetic eye and the sight of the Kingdom of Life, in seeing “the fig-tree put forth her leaves and knowing that summer is nigh,” where ruin only is the sight that meets the intellect.

*July 22nd.*—To-day for the first time in my life my bank-book, after a minute or two of habit of fear, has brought me no terror. It is now only £1240 to the bad. £1000 has to be paid in for the old school, leaving £240. £100 from salary and another payment, leaving £140. I have £60 on my private account, leaving £80. Thank God, the next payments will see me out of debt. *Latus sorte mea*. Gentle and true may I be, and not ask God for departure, or anything but spirit life for me and mine. *Theory and Practice*, combined

with the educational address, have made a stir, and I am being quoted now constantly.

*July 24th.*—A kind of happy awe comes over me when I think, as is the fact, that the touch of a few minutes of highest life can be felt to be a full requital for years of pain, as God has shown me by letting me come near my queen on her deathbed, nay, her birthday to life. What abysses of divine felicity must be in heaven where life reigns!

*July 30th.*—The quiet last evening come at last. To-morrow we start for Scotland. The most eventful term of my life come to an end—eventful, that is, in the strange and wonderful world of thought and feeling into which I have been launched; the great mystery of life which I have been lifted and moved into. . . . The clear and yet most startling language of life by which many little bits of life combine into a spiritual message full of happy awe, unmistakable, though but half-read, is a revelation. One thing at once I have gained unmistakably: the content that leaves dreams of change alone, and now—leaves me without a wish and scarcely a thought about being moved from here. . . . Then the addresses and the book and the call to take part in the world work of education is most strange. The way, too, I have been brought in contact with the high schools for girls is another message chiming in with the inward feeling that God, through my queen, and my loyalty to her, means me to be a champion of women. All this moves in my being always with a strange new power, and has altered, raised, transfigured my whole life. Then the being set free from debt lifts off me the life-long pain and heavy weight that crushed me all too much. . . . Altogether it has been most full of life. . . . To-morrow we go.

*November 15th.*—Been thinking much how dream-like life is, and how utterly ignorant we are of what is really going on. But I had rather be an unknown part of the inner life of Christ's world than sway empires. The Empire ruler puts in motion for good or evil external machinery which the inner life has to deal with, but the inner life is the only truth even then. I believe it has been given me to make many lives happier and better. That is indeed a gift of God.

*November 23rd.*—Miss Buss was here. It was very interesting. She is an able woman, and well up in the whole

educational movement. I was immensely pleased at her saying that I was the first man who had acknowledged them as fellow-workers, and that when my invitation to the mistresses to hold their conference at Uppingham came before the committee, they were silent and speechless, so much were they struck by the public recognition.

*January 17th, 1886.*—Another very interesting letter from Mrs. Kingsley; also from Miss Lohse, my New Zealand schoolmistress. It is most curious how many little “liftings of the veil,” cheering bits of life and spirit power have been given me in the past month. . . . To-day I heard a thing which struck me much. My girls have been over the India-rubber Factory at Manchester; they saw there a respectable old man whose life-work for thirty years had been dipping balls in some liquid to vulcanise them. For thirty years! and then to think of my repining over my life. God help me. . . .

*January 18th.*—It is very strange and comforting to me, the numerous messages of spirit life and of the “goodly fellowship of the prophets” that have reached me lately. Not least my correspondence with Mrs. Kingsley, and knowing that he and she had a strong feeling for Uppingham and the work here. It sweetens life wonderfully.

*February 5th.*—A most interesting letter to me from St. Cloud to-day asking me to write a special address to the teachers of Minnesota, and giving me a sketch of what is going on and what they want. How wonderful this communion of life is! I pray God to put in my mouth what to say. I shall do it with great delight if it is given me.

*March 2nd.*—My trustee payment in to-day. They have positively put me back again to the lowest legal rate allowed them. I marvel; even after all the past, I marvel. They seem incapable of waking.

*May 25th.*—It is strangely wonderful what a change for the better has come over me in this last year—how full of contentment and peace I have become. God has given a blessing. I was unsettled and longing for a change with a kind of resigned discontent and hungry acquiescence, and now my whole heart is quiet, and though not free from care, free from chafing, and willing.

*June 28th.*—Went to see old Mrs. S—— to-day, who is

able to come downstairs after her long illness—carried downstairs. It is beautiful to see such simple goodness. I feel greatly cheered that she should long for me to visit her. (I never spoke to her before.) Of all things in the world, to be a comfort to the holy and the weak is the greatest blessing God can give. How little the old lady can know how much her approval and wish is to me. But what greater thing can be given on earth to man than the testimony of the pure and holy weakness of those whose only claim is holiness and weakness.

*July 24th.*—I am very much touched by the quiet devotion with which Skrine strives to lighten my work and brighten my life. I am very grateful.

In the last few years of his life Thring's whole educational horizon was greatly enlarged. What he had done for the cause of education, what he had said and written about it, began to command wide attention. In 1883 his *Theory and Practice of Teaching* appeared. A second English edition which was almost immediately called for proved that his seed thoughts had fallen on more gracious soil than when he first expressed them in *Education and School*; the demand for an American edition indicated that he had got a hearing abroad.

Thenceforward to the end of his life he had no lack of platforms from which to speak. He was chosen President of the Education Society, and made his Presidential Address the occasion for reiterating many of the truths which had at first inspired his work, and were now set forth anew with the backing of thirty years of teaching experience. He was asked to visit America, and failing that, to write addresses for various important teaching bodies there. His work and theories were discussed on both sides of the Atlantic. The Church Congress, the Teachers' Guild, the meeting of Headmistresses, the Education Society of the University

of Cambridge, the Teachers of Minnesota, are a few of the bodies before whom he was asked to unfold his ideas on education.

This widening of his field of influence filled him with happiness.

"The feeling of opening life," he says, "not of closing, is on me. Some observations in a Life of Moltke that I have been reading have seemed prophecies of my just beginning the most fruitful work of my life, though I am sixty-two, and within all is the buoyant sense of just having learnt to work and learnt to live a little, and of the life yet to be lived in this power. I know not, God knows what He has in store, but a more expansive feeling of the life work, freer, nobler, higher than the past, is in my heart. Perchance it means beyond the grave. Yet it does not feel so. God knows. I glory in the work He has allowed me to do, and the pains by which He crucified my foolish delusions of success. It is all being brought to a fruitful end, be it a new beginning or be it not."

And again :—

I feel somehow or other as if in Tennyson's words I "had rolled into a younger day," and the prison doors were opening in which one has been shut up so many years. I do not know why quite, but I feel it, and I thank God for it.

An interesting school commemoration which occurred in 1884, brought out with prominence some of his guiding principles. Archdeacon Johnson had founded the school in 1584, and so the tercentenary anniversary fell in 1884, thirty-one years from the time when Thring entered upon his work of refounding it.

It was felt by the old boys and friends of the school that the time was a peculiarly fitting one for doing honour to the original founder, and at the same time strengthening the position of the new foundation. Thring had always delighted to connect his new work with the old. The heritage of the past appealed to

him from the practical as well as the traditional point of view.

"Not least on this account," he says in one of his books, "are the old Foundations a great saving power in the land. Whatever their faults may be, they are generally free from meddling, free from the necessity of always producing some show, something saleable. They are able to stand a storm without shrinking, and to face with calmness the morning letter-bag and the penny post. But above all, they are strong in the fact that their origin dates from the liberality of the dead. Their roots are in the hallowed past, and out of the grave of great and good men, great and good at all events so far as not grudging money in a good cause, grows the shelter under which the work of education is carried on."

He closes a statement made to the Trust in 1878 as follows :—

Then at the coming tercentenary of the foundation the three hundred years that have passed will give promise of a better three hundred years to come ; and we may have good hope that this old school, when the cycle is full again, may still be found standing fast in the front ranks, still upholding in honour the time-honoured name of Archdeacon Johnson's school at Uppingham.

Still as the time of the anniversary drew near, he was not altogether in sympathy with what was proposed.

He dreaded the breath of false praise ; he doubted whether a celebration such as that suggested was in keeping with the practical, everyday principles which formed the foundation of his work.

I feel utterly out of heart for this tercentenary. When I think of all the inner failure, how little has been done, and how much the outward buildings and work seem, when I think even that little will probably all be swept away in a few years and the usual sham flourish here, I have no heart in me

any more for tercentenaries. How I should have exulted in it fifteen years ago. I am wiser now.

The enthusiasm of old boys and other supporters, however, gradually overcame his hesitation, and finally he threw himself heartily into the arrangements for the gathering.

The appeal issued on the occasion shows the light in which he regarded the anniversary. . . .

The celebration of a birthday is an appeal to affection and honour.

The school does appeal to feelings of affection and honour on this, its great birthday, its tercentenary of life.

It appeals as one of the few original endowments of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It was founded by Archdeacon Johnson in 1584, "By God's grace," as the first words of the old statutes declare, and endowed with lands purchased by him from the Queen: an honest gift made in the lifetime of the founder. All honour to him for this.

The Queen, at all events, honoured him and his work; for when she granted the Charter in 1587 A.D., she caused it to be recorded that she herself was witness to the deed.

Such was the original birthday—the birthday of a good man's hope and gift, liberally given, "By God's grace," in his lifetime.

After this the school fared with varied fortunes, but no great change, until thirty years ago it began to be remodelled.

A simple principle, but an effective one, was, "By God's grace," once more the basis of the new departure.

That principle was, that each boy should have justice done to him, with its corollary, that no work can be done without tools.

Many different lives come from home into a great school to find a better training than home can give; and they require many different means to shape them, or they do not get it.

In the last thirty years a sum of £91,000 has been expended, almost entirely by the masters, in order to carry out this conception of what a school ought to be. This

expenditure constitutes practically a new foundation of the old school. . . .

Our tercentenary, therefore, appeals to all who love the old, and feel the power of being heirs of a good man's purpose.

It appeals to all who love the new, and are fired by hope, and a wish to take part in a living work. . . .

There was a large gathering of people to honour the occasion, and naturally the school received much notice in the public press.

Thring was anxious above all else that the celebration should not be a mere glorification of the increase in numbers and prestige which had made Uppingham take rank among the great public schools. On the whole, his wish was gratified. The speeches made upon the occasion by Bishop Harvey Goodwin of Carlisle, Bishop Fraser of Manchester, and others of the distinguished men who came to show their sympathy with what had been done at Uppingham, made it clear that they recognised and gave the first importance to the principles upon which the system of the school was based, and the religious spirit which inspired the work.

His diary says after the celebration :—

*July 4th.*—Two things stand out distinct in the midst of it all. First, the great gain to honest work in England. Wherever any man is doing his best to be true, there the universal declaration of the need to do justice to each boy, and the respect paid to the dictum must have brought comfort and strength. . . .

*July 5th.*—Another comforting fact has come into my mind concerning the tercentenary, that the founder's expression, "By the grace of God," and my own has been brought out both in the papers and in the bishop's sermon, so that great motive, in the midst of this secular age, has come out well. This is a great comfort.

To REV. GODFREY THRING.

*July 12th, 1884.*

I had not heard of dear mother's joy at the notice of the work here. It gives me infinite pleasure. Tell her that next to the work itself I always wished that she should know that I had tried to do a true thing. And I rejoice exceedingly that she has seen the truth of it acknowledged. I am so thankful it is all over. Thankful more than I can tell that we have escaped the poisonous breath of false praise, of numbers and intellect worship, and all I have striven against all my life long, and that the plain independent basis of doing right by each boy has been brought out so clearly. At all events, now the voice has been heard which for so many years has been smothered. And *that* is everything. Come weal, come woe, *that* is real success.

After the anniversary the Bishop of Manchester writes to him :—

*LONDON, June 30th, 1884.*

If our presence at your most successful tercentenary festival was any strengthening of your hands, we came away on our part with intense feelings of satisfaction at having been allowed to see and realise the great work which your many years of self-denying labour have achieved for Uppingham, and through Uppingham, for that great class of English society who so much need a rightly directed education for their sons. The only element of regret which mixed itself with that satisfaction was that people told me, on all hands, that in carrying out this work you had thought of everything but yourself; and when a man has "given hostages to fortune," I confess I think he ought not to leave that consideration wholly out of sight. Still, in the almost universal race for self, such a life as yours has been has a special richness of example, and it has been a privilege to me to witness it. . . .

## CHAPTER XIV

### CORRESPONDENCE ON EDUCATIONAL AND GENERAL QUESTIONS

To REV. A. F. BOUCHER.

*March 31st, 1870.*

I DO not think the idea of making a better school than Eton was ever consciously in my thoughts in that shape. It rather was a set determination to try and do true work, and act honestly by each boy, with a deep sense of the value of life, as a thing where no waste could be other than a sin, and a no less deep faith in the certainty that never leaving a boy to rot in neglect must result in raising the life and tone of the whole body. You have rightly named one of the greatest of my practical difficulties ; nine-tenths of the boys who come here have first to learn that education is really worth something, and next, that they are able to get it. Had I ever had any idea of racing Eton or such schools, I should have folded my hands long ago, but that never was my object. I thought and still think that in time the best system will produce the best men all round, but I would not have got up from my chair to make a few better scholars only ; to make every boy a good and happy man, if possible, that I hold to be worth many lives. But during the time that reputation meant daily bread and the power of going on, it was very trying to see how heavily weighted we were in the race. Very trying, too, to find, as was and is the case still, our own success acting against

us. I know many cases. I know one important private tutor who openly avows it, where the delicate or stupid boys are sent to us, as the only place where real care is taken, and the clever and promising elsewhere. This is a compliment one could sometimes dispense with. Nevertheless, I am thoroughly satisfied with all the main facts here; I can easily imagine less toil and more apparent fruit, but the solid beginning of a new kind of school life is laid solidly, and I have no fear of its being destroyed. It may possibly have a relapse here, but most assuredly there are those who will build it up elsewhere whether it does or not. Thank you for your kind and intelligent appreciation. It cheers me.

To T. H. BIRLEY.

*September 26th, 1873.*

. . . There is no analogy as regards the working life of the two between the life of a parochial clergyman and a schoolmaster. I have tried both. The parochial clergyman is brought in contact daily with every form of life and death that can stir a religious man's heart and keep his faith alive, and is then left to do his work or not as he pleases.

The schoolmaster is brought in contact daily with every species of petty vexation and wearing responsibility and is compelled to do a hard day's work spread over a number of hours, and day by day at a given moment, well or ill, to be at his post, whether he pleases or not. What analogy is there between the two excepting in the one fact that if well done they are both important and holy works? Still less analogy is there between a schoolmaster and a college tutor. A college tutor lives in a place where his whole life is as shielded from care, and as glorified, as it possibly can be; he has very little compulsory work, and vacations long enough to sweeten even slavery, and yet—it is notorious that the colleges cannot keep the majority of their best men even with the hope behind all this present gain, of college patronage, headships, and government to boot. I boldly assert that man is a fool who, in establishing anything which is to last many years, disregards the ordinary motives of ordinary men and average workers.

I freely admit no man can buy martyrs, or go into the market and purchase the heart blood of men, but the argument cuts both ways, if money will not ensure excellence of the highest kind it does not shut it out, and money properly applied does ensure average excellence and makes the best easier to be got . . . I protest in the name of English education and common sense against paying good work starvation prices, because you may get bad work for higher payments. The only legislation worth the name will proceed to fix a trade basis fitted to get the best work from average men taking a series of years, and will not fit its plans on exceptional men and exceptional times.

There are only three conditions under which good work may be looked for permanently. The first is when the work can offer such emolument at once as to make an early retirement easy and certain. The second is when there is no immediate gain, but the door is open to great ultimate wealth and rank if a man is successful, as is the case in the law. The third is when sufficient to enable a man to marry and settle is given early. The high-class work market cannot be commanded on any other terms than these. The two first are closed to schools and schoolmasters, the last remains. If that is not conceded, then I assert without the slightest fear of contradiction that permanent good work is impossible. All the schools on the barrack system have raised their terms greatly, and if they are multiplied, the impossibility of finding many competent men who will work for starvation pay will become more and more apparent. As long as there are only a few such schools which serve as stepping-stones to other things, and which have not had time to get to their level, the truth is less apparent. I send some other papers to illustrate my statement.

To G. R. PARKIN.

(*No date.*)

There is no point on which my convictions are stronger than on the power of boarding schools in forming national character. . . . There is a very strong feeling growing up among the merchant class in England in favour of the public

schools ; and hundreds go to schools now who thirty years ago would not have thought of doing so. The learning to be responsible, and independent, to bear pain, to play games, to drop rank, and wealth, and home luxury, is a priceless boon. I think myself that it is this which has made the English such an adventurous race ; and that with all their faults, and you know how decided my views are on this side, the public schools are the cause of this manliness. I think you may add to your classification "and the merchants" ; and that it is the fixed idea with every Englishman, in the lump, that it is the thing to send a boy to a public school, and the ordinary English gentleman would think he lost caste by not doing so. Then the boy world becomes a definite world by itself, and school life and its doings an important factor in the social world. The first germ of the boarding school I believe to have been the sending lads into the families of the great nobles to be educated in all knightly proficiency with the children of the house.

Then the first endowments took their rise from the monasteries which always had schools for the education of the clergy. Thus the public school is a cross between these two.

As regards class feeling, the thing wisely managed settles itself. As soon as it is possible to make a good boarding school work over a wide area, only those who have time to stay five, six, seven years or more at it have a chance. This at once silently decides that none but the monied classes can form the bulk of the school, this soon makes an educated class, and then endowments in England are used to help forward the poorer and less powerful but intelligent workers.

#### TO THE SAME.

*July 9th, 1875.*

I do not of course know what to say to your troubles, as I am not acquainted with the circumstances. I can, however, state most positively two things : First, that a school such as Uppingham cannot exist unless there is a very strong religious feeling in the ruler, and power to concentrate it without the

friction of controversy. And secondly, that if no religious teaching was given in the school work at all, the religious character of the school would be equally important, as it is the spirit of the teachers and rulers that signifies ; the principles they are animated with in their work rather than any actual tuition that is put out by them. I do not know how this can be carried out in Canada. If it cannot be carried out, then Canada must be content with a lower type of educational life. The recent legislation with us puts practically all the schools in England under separate bodies of trustees and requires an examination and inspection—one or both—once a year. This would have come under a government board, the worst form under which anything can be done in England, had we not staved it off by getting the universities to undertake it.

What ought to be done is this : Trustees ought simply to be police with management of property, supervising and reporting power, but no authority whatever to interfere with the internal work of a school. Then there ought to be a council or councils composed of schoolmasters, lawyers, and men of authority in about equal proportions, before which all cases should be tried that required trial, and who should have power to issue new regulations, subject to Parliament. Then the headmaster ought to be supreme in all matters of work as being a skilled workman, and no amateur in authority ought to have any power to meddle with him. This last point I have secured for Uppingham. My trustees can dismiss me or my successor with six months' notice, without assigning cause, and without appeal, but they cannot tell us how to work, or interfere with our working.

TO REV. EDWARD WHITE.

*November 28th.*

As regards education in England I am simply in despair, as far as mere human foresight goes.

In the higher school world there have been seven or eight years of commissions, talk and legislation, without as yet the point "what is necessary to make a school work well at all"

having been raised by any one. And the whole of England is to be reconstructed by these blind, clever, ignorant men. Then below there is a simple scramble, with a great ignoring of what has been already done. I and many others doubtless have no fortress ; all we believe is that if England throws up religious education it is the worse for England. But England is not the world nor the exclusive home of that truth against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail." I and mine will follow that, please God, *here* if we can, *elsewhere* if we cannot. Certainly at present the choice is a fearful one. The Caliban that our untaught fellow-countryman is *must* be got rid of, but it is a dreadful exchange if he is to be made a blind Samson ready to pull the world on himself, friend, and foe in his unguided intellectual efforts. However, I admit better than than Caliban, as there is some stuff in the taught man. I am quite prepared to take my chance. But I admit, when I see the lower orders evading honest work everywhere, and their rulers governing by a series of scrambling compromises, and the press glorifying our omniscience, and the wise liberty of universal jaw and noise ! I cannot be very hopeful for England. My ideas of life are *work*. Of government, the plan of the men who *have worked*, chosen and supervised of wisdom ; quiet experience rated high, and noise rated low. The exact opposite to my belief is taking place through the length and breadth of this land. But I hope as long as the *liberty to work in our own way* is left. That seems likely to go too, and a sort of Trades Union to become England ; I shall have little hope then if alive and shall recommend my children to try another land if events take that turn.

To C. W. G. HYDE

(*No date.*)

We have got so far in England that the very word "teaching" only means putting out knowledge so that clever boys and girls learn, and the true meaning "that teaching is the dealing with the minds of pupils, and drawing out and strengthening their powers," is absolutely to most unintelligible, and it is useless to talk of teaching when the hearers

understand an entirely different thing from the speaker. I am intensely interested in this question. It seems to me a positive curse to set up lumps of knowledge, other people's thoughts, as an idol, and by this idolatry to destroy for generations the true progress of thought and mind. Above all, it is a curse to enthrone strength, and to consign the ordinary good working mind and heart of the world to neglect and contempt. A good teacher, with fair play and time, *ought to rejoice in a stupid boy*, as an interesting problem, and when good and willing, a delight and a reward. . . .

If I can do anything to help your work it will give me great pleasure to lend my hand. If your teachers have the chance of really teaching, I mean, if they have the time allowed them, and if they have classes small enough, and if they have a feeling for mind and not for books only, a feeling for the weak and struggling, and not merely for the clever and strong, then you are far better off than we are in England at present, and may do great things. For my part I had rather have a hand in training the solid working power of the world than be glorified for any amount of successful stars. I simply think that the one great hindrance to the welfare of the world is the fact that power almost always is in the hands of men who have no bodies and are all head, and who in consequence know nothing of our common humanity. We schoolmasters have this mission, if we are true—a mission to give every one, be he clever or be he stupid, a fair chance in life; and not to be, as has been too much the case, murderers—for it is nothing less—of the higher life of the great majority of mankind. Power-worship and contempt for ordinary minds, and putting knowledge above thought, is the modern Moloch.

*Education and School* had been written in 1867, just when success had crowned his long struggle at Uppingham, and when his unprecedented feat of having in a few years forced a small grammar school into the front rank of public schools might have been expected to secure for him a hearing on school

methods. As has been said, the book, influential with the few, found at first no popular audience. He records with a feeling of deep disappointment, and as a sharp blow to his vanity, the small number of copies sold in the first year. To this failure to arrest public attention succeeded a long silence of sixteen years. That silence was only broken at the urgent request of a fellow-worker no less devoted than himself to educational truth and progress. The following letters explain the genesis of the *Theory and Practice of Teaching*, which appeared in 1883 :—

To REV. R. H. QUICK.

May 1882.

Your letter is somewhat like the bow drawn at a venture, and I doubt whether the arrow has hit Ahab. Without joking, though, it opens a wide question, and one which has been the subject of anxious thought with me for many years. I would willingly do what I can to help on the subject of my heart, true education—the subject on which life and fortune have been staked by me. Of course, publication and writing is one way of doing it. But—when I was young I naturally rushed into print, and as you know, *Education and School*, the only book on the real subject, neither sells, nor is even quoted in school discussions, though I have private reasons for knowing that it has not failed as a seed power. To take first the public question : a long experience compels me to accept the mournful axiom *populus vult decipi*. I cannot do the *decipiatur*, and they will not have the truth. If there had been no stir you would move me more. I began when there was as yet no stir, I was early in the field ; I brought into the field knowledge trained by daily practice in national schools on the one hand, and a wide acquaintance with public schools on the other, and the rank of first man of my year in classics at Cambridge. If ever man's heart was in his work, mine was, and is. I know also that it has

not been in vain. Apart from practical success here against odds which God only knows, I have from time to time had casual information such as you yourself have given me now, that the real leaders in education did get something from me; but when I turn to the external facts I see an immense rush, legislative and popular, has taken place during these thirty years, and the net result has been that up to the present moment every principle I believe in has been either buried under a mass of rubbish or deliberately rejected. The practical government of education is in the hands of amateurs who have never taught. The intellectual throne of education is assigned with much pomp to intellectual Goliaths, who have never taught. Education is the only subject in which total ignorance of the real subject-matter, total ignorance of the trade knowledge gains absolute pre-eminence. The hour has not come.

Then take the publishers. . . . They are wise in their generation, but they shut the door against new truths, and the lending libraries put the final burke on, as they only want entertaining works, or the last scare. So you see I feel but little encouragement to put my thoughts on paper, or indeed possibility; for I am poor and getting too old to trust to future success against loss. Moreover, as you rightly say my headmaster work is almost crushing, and unless I felt the most intense conviction that it was right and good to try and make an educational book, I could not find heart to match myself against time in this way. Meanwhile, the work goes on here, and I shall be very glad to show you that we are not idle, and have much variety of new power moving if ever you are inclined to pay me a visit here.

*P.S.*—I will bear the notes in mind in case the spirit moves me. If I had but time it might be different.

REV. R. H. QUICK TO REV. E. THRING.

Your letter makes me all the more unwilling to give up the hope of another educational book from you. As you say, education is almost the only subject in which the doers never get a hearing, and all the talking is done by people who

see everything merely from the outside. But there are very few indeed who have practical acquaintance with school work, and at the same time literary skill enough to make themselves intelligible to the ordinary reader. And these few, alas ! are apt to get disgusted and make excuses for not writing. As they find plenty to do without writing or talking, they feel inclined to leave the writing and talking to those who have nothing else to do. So the public has scarcely a fair chance. The public is certainly no seeker for truth, and reads as a gourmand eats—for pleasure, not health—so it cares far more for the cooking than for the wholesomeness of the diet. But after all, there is a permanence about truth that there is not about nonsense, however well cooked, and those who bring home truth to even a few people on such a subject have, perhaps, an ever-spreading influence which would seem to them ample recompense if they knew of it.

This second appeal prevailed, and the book was written during the winter of 1882-83. It appeared with a dedication to his friend as "the sole cause that it has been written."

To REV. R. H. QUICK.

*September 3rd, 1883.*

I am very glad that the dedication has pleased you. You richly deserve any pleasure it may give you, for two good reasons. You are the only man I have met with who has not been a mere partisan in education, who has not looked at it through professional spectacles of more or less self-interest, and been a modernist, because that was his line, or a classicist, because that was his line ; but has quietly looked and thought about what is *best*. I had real pleasure in giving you such honour as I can give. And secondly, if you knew how repugnant your request was to me, how for years I had made up my mind to mix no more in the hopeless struggle which the popular voice glorifies, and law has ratified as the right thing ; how repugnant it was to me to take the cherished gains of my life of work and go down with them into the lost

battle, you would appreciate how completely true that dedication is, and that for good or evil you are responsible for the appearance of the book. I fear you will find much difficulty with your national schools. That accursed system of constant inspection is killing true work there also, and preventing men from sound progress.

The little volume at once attracted public attention. Workers in all parts of the world recognised in the writer a powerful and sympathetic spirit, and turned to him for counsel and assistance. He was flooded with invitations to address educational bodies, or to write educational articles. The sense of new life working far and wide threw a halo of brightness and happiness over years otherwise much clouded with anxious cares. His letters are full of the inspiration of widening life.

TO REV. R. H. QUICK.

July 24th, 1885.

Please look at the second edition. I have added much and some very important germinating ideas.

A curious change has come over the educational world, as regards Uppingham at all events, in the last two years. Up to that time a religious silence, deep and unbroken, was kept about Uppingham and myself whenever any discussion on education, written or *viva voce*, went on. Since then, I am quoted everywhere (government talk alone excepted), and if width of space is anything, the cause has made way. I have correspondence with the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Hungary, Germany, and know that the seed is being sown there. Your "echo" from Boston, U.S., is no solitary instance. Certainly, if modern life is the most barred and strait-waistcoated, it is also the freest the world has seen. "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage" for it. Let a land imprison it how it may, if truly living it has the range of all the earth, and can drop and root itself somewhere or other.

To G. R. PARKIN.

*August 23rd, 1884.*

I know very well what external disadvantages you labour under. Have I not gone through all of them? Do I not now even remember with a shudder, amongst many like evils, the Sunday services in a poky corner of a stuffy, stinking gallery of one of the worst conducted churches in England, which was my lot to begin with; and that, too, when keenly sensitive to externals and their influence, and basing all the school work to be done on religion? This was a specimen. I almost marvel now how I lived through the humiliation, the starvation of right means, the opposition, the debt, the evil speaking, and all the grit and hindrances to true work. It was touch-and-go at one time. But there is one virtue in a great true principle however smothered or strangled, as far as it has breath it makes life more worth living, and work higher. Like Job's prayer on the dunghill, one would not select a dunghill or match it with a cathedral; but if it is one's fate to be there, a right good prayer can be prayed in spite of—yea—because of it.

To Miss F. LOHSE (CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND).

*March 9th, 1885.*

I agree with almost everything you say, excepting your respect for educational laws. We are being throttled by laws. A democracy is worse than a despotism for killing by law. Above all, two systems must never be mixed. A benevolent despotism does its best to make a perfect system; but half despotism and half liberty only means liberty to go wrong, and despotism to choke right. . . .

The great hope of our day appears to me to be the marvellous way in which work passes electrically through the world, and communion of purpose cheers workers in the most distant lands. . . .

For goodness' sake, do not call in government; we shall all be in iron masks before long if we go on in England as we are doing. The face divine of high and thoughtful education will be seen no more.

## TO THE SAME.

July 6th, 1885.

I quite agree with your wish to prevent incompetent persons teaching, but a scalded dog dreads *cold* water, and I have seen such evil here from government interference, and have found so many difficulties while studying that very question here, as to make me willing rather "to bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of." Besides, is not an incompetent master or mistress — incompetent because the wrong article altogether—a government machine with the government prize medal—much worse than any ignorance? A government machine, when life is wanted in a kingdom of life! and do not schemes which won't work honestly, turn out the dishonest minds, which, having been dealt with without care, see nothing dishonest in dealing with others without care? For my part, I believe in life and in liberty, but the tyranny of a mob is worse than that of a despot, and I dread above all things setting up mean authorities over the skilled workman. I should like to set going a confederation of skilled workmen all around the world to resist interference from amateur authority in matters of working detail. . . .

I quite understand how anxious you must be to get a little more order and discipline into your new and unformed world. But we in the last twenty years have had a powerful and self-satisfied hand grasping our heart-strings tighter and tighter, until I begin to hate the very sound of anything pertaining to government. . . .

## TO H. COURTHOPE BOWEN.

October 31st, 1885.

I have been thinking carefully and sadly over your letter, and am tempted to ask the question: Can nothing be done? If, as I see many signs abroad, the professional body are beginning to chafe under the terrible slavery, and resent it, can no anti-slavery league, however small, be formed? I believe in small beginnings, and in a "solid core of heat,"

working outwards. Is such a core impossible? Of course I see clearly enough that the present exponents of education in London won't do. As far as I know them, they are the strangest mixture of red tape, crude dissatisfaction, narrow sciolism, revolutionary fumes, unworkable old, and unworkable new, kneaded up into an infallible pudding, that can be imagined; but there is evidently much life in the general mass. I don't say anything can be done; I merely throw out the suggestion. To me the course of events during the past thirty years is simply appalling. Slowly, but surely, chaos, which nevertheless was *possible creation*, has been taken possession of by the iron room of the story, which every day contracted one panel till at last the living inmate found himself in his coffin. The coffin is now very close. If free education, with its locust band of inspection and examination, is to come up over the land, farewell teaching, farewell liberty, farewell life—and movement. England's field of mind will be as dreary a waste as Egypt of old, when nothing that was not beneath the earth remained alive of its vegetation and life-sustaining crops. At all events, I hope you will not be dumb. From time to time a working man finds his work passing into his life, and opening out a path, and bidding him move. You, I think, have such a path opening, and feel the command coming, or come. I don't know; but if so, obey. Follow where work leads. Speak where work knocks against the lips for utterance.

Sometimes his ideals found vehement expression even in the daily press.

An earnest attempt had been made by the founding of the Finsbury Training College for Teachers, to establish a means by which the teachers of public and middle schools could get some professional preparation for their work.

Writing to the *Times* (2nd Feb. 1886) in support of the new effort, he says:—

Mind is not so absolutely uniform or so plain a surface as to present no variety in dealing with it; and the progress of the world depends on how mind is dealt with; and intelligent

exercise of mind is the crown of human excellence ; and teaching means the skill necessary to produce such excellence. Infinite variety, all true progress, the highest work, and the skill necessary to produce the highest work combine in the ideal of teaching.

Therefore (he continues) any one can do it. Therefore it is unnecessary to train a teacher. But no one can unlock a door without a key. The world is full of locked doors. Every child is a locked door. But where are the keys ? Where is there any distinct conviction even that any key is wanted ?—nay, that such an article as a key to mind exists ? The sloppy idea of education which prevails, reduced to shape and practice, means a set of trucks all in a row, memory trucks, with navvies pitching ballast into them against time, or not doing so, as the case may be. But loading up other people's facts is not training minds. . . .

One more point demands notice. There are not only no keys, but the present system prevents keys being made.

A key is adapted to fit intricacies, and to wind in and out of queer passages. The successful scholar is the man who has run through his work most smoothly and found the fewest obstacles. And these are the men who are selected to deal with the greatest number of obstacles and difficulties. I know by personal experience that it is possible to turn out very successful work, winning work, without the slightest knowledge of the real structure of the work which wins. I did it myself. But in teaching, the structure of the work is everything, and the power of turning out the perfect result nothing. If for one year all rules and lesson books could be swept clean out of the world, and the performers be brought face to face with mind, the little boy mind, and compelled to trade on their own resources, and forced to meet the real problem of mind dealing with mind, and no possibility of truck work, why, then, there would be much tearing of the hair and, if the Oriental fashion was followed, a great rending of the clothes, many backs left bare ; but a new creation would have begun, thousands of minds would come out of prison, and it would be no longer necessary to advocate the training of teachers.

To C. W. G. HYDE.

*Free Schools—Tax-paid Schools.*

The question of free schools has been raised, and the United States of America appear to be convinced that they are right in establishing what are called free schools. As regards any lesson to be learned from the practice of the United States by European communities, it is sufficient to observe that, until density of population and want of unoccupied land make the conditions of life approximately the same in the United States as in Europe, there is no common ground to stand on in considering the wisdom or unwisdom of any political movement if practice only is looked to. Success in the United States does not imply successful principles any more than the living at ease on a hundred acres, and wasting a good deal of corn, implies the living at ease and wasting corn in a crowded street.

Nevertheless, the shrewd experience of a shrewd landholder may be very valuable to a pinched and hard-pressed landless man ; and still more, I submit, will the shrewd experience of the hard-pressed man be valuable to the wide-elbowed owner of large estates.

I am one of the much hard-pressed, squeezed, landless Europeans.

Heavy pressure, and toes trodden on, tend to make the uncomfortable examine into the principles of crowds, and toes trodden on, and the elbow of your neighbour in your ribs.

The principles are the same whether two stand in a broad plain, or two thousand jostle in a narrow street.

And perhaps the question of the Government providing teaching for all the poor out of the taxes paid by those who can pay, which is miscalled free education, puts the problem of how far law can rightly interfere with private duty, and the solemn responsibility of manhood and life, in its most attractive form in favour of interference. My assertion is that it is *dishonest*, that it is *a mistake*, that it is *deadly* for law to interfere.

Has every man a right to live ?

That is the first question.

That question is at the bottom of all discussions on property, work, wealth, and tax-paid schooling.

All civilised mankind thunders forth an emphatic "NO ! every man has not a right to live."

Then who has a right to live, and under what conditions has a man a right to live ? That is the practical question for working men. Every community, especially in its first beginnings, disposes of the question of the right to live by promptly lynching—denying, that is, the right to live to all persons who proceed to put this right in practice by living on the stolen work—the stolen product, that is, of the life of others.

That is the first, the universal answer.

The right to live is limited at once by the all-important limitation, that it shall not be exercised by preying on the life of others. Where society only exists in the simple form of working in order to live, death is at once made the penalty of taking part of the life work—the property, that is, of another.

The man who does not work in order to live is put out of life.

And property or, in plain words, the right to live unrobbed on the work of life, is established as the first step above the savage state.

It is obvious that it makes no difference whether the work a man lives on is his own work or the inherited store of the work of his father or his father's fathers.

It is equally obvious that having been born without means of support confers no more right on the child to prey on society and live on plunder than his father, the beggar, had before him.

The next step in the social scale is when either the strong leader, or the society, undertakes to defend the life and property of the individual in return for a tax paid, either in personal service, goods, or money.

This is the first tax, the principle is simple. The law in effect says, if you will pay me, I, who am stronger, will undertake to defend your property and life.

Every tax in principle is the same. Every tax is a payment made by the individual to buy in return a given service.

Law cannot give a man's money to another man as a gift without perpetrating an act of dishonesty, any more than an individual can walk into a shop and empty the till, and give it to the starving orphan outside and be honest.

The shopkeeper may even be a cheat, but it is as much

robbery to rob a cheat by force as to rob an honest person, even if you do give the money to the starving orphan.

And thousands of years of experience prove that no man, no society, can go on robbing, and being robbed, without falling to pieces. There is no salvation in robbery by law.

Let me here interpose that law, compulsory will that is, is entirely different from Christianity, and freedom of action, and love, voluntarily working in special ways. The muddling up these opposite principles has done untold harm to the world.

We are dealing with law.

Law then emphatically asserts that no man has a right to live who does not conform to the conditions of life, that a man must not prey on others, but maintain himself. Christianity, however, asserts this with equal emphasis.

At what point does property cease to be sacred on the one hand, and at what point does the poor man get the right of taking it on the other, whether by law or by pistol?

That is the whole question at issue in the present day.

To take an example. Has the lawyer, whose skilled work as a lawyer has taken him thirty years, expensive years, of unproductive labour to acquire, whose skilled work demands strength above the average, and who, after his thirty years of unproductive and laborious expenditure, runs the risk of failure and getting nothing; has he, if he succeeds, and gets for all this outlay over so many years of life £100 a week, rendered himself a fair object of plunder for the poor artisan, who began earning wages as a lad, and required no special skill or strength to earn them?

But if not, when does it become honest to rob a man earning higher wages for skilled labour and extraordinary power, and give them to men of less skill and working power, for worse work and less of it too?

If, again, it is not honest for one man to rob his fellow in this way, is it honest for ten to do it, or a hundred?

Are a thousand, even if they meet in the town hall, or twenty hundred thousand, if they send members to Congress and pass a law, to take the money and give it to some one else, honest?

Whether it is done by law or by brute force, alters the guilt of the doers perhaps, but it does not alter the guilt of the act.

A gift of money taken from other men who get nothing in return is robbery, whether pistol, sword, or law is the force that robs; whether one or a million are concerned in the deed. . . .

No law has any right when a man has been industrious, thrifty, restrained his passions, and married late, to take his money in order to pay for the support of the children of his idle, thriftless, dissolute neighbour, who seduced, or married some unhappy woman because of his lust, and now demands that his self-denying neighbour should pay, by maintaining the children, for his gratifying his passions.

No law can make it honest to take a good man's earnings and give them to a bad man's sins, or improvidences.

But this is done by every law which taxes those who have to pay for the children of those who have not.

The moment the consequences of a man's idleness or evil deeds are taken off him, his power of idling and doing evil deeds is increased in proportion to the relief given.

If the drunkard's children are brought up by the State, the State is paying for the drunkenness of the father, and practically is buying his beer for him.

A tax which gives a working man's money to feed the idle man's child is simply beer money, nothing less. It matters not whether the food is bodily or mental. It increases the working man's hours of labour, or lowers the wages for them, in order that the idle man may idle and drink more securely.

It matters not whether the working community are willing to pay the tax or not; in principle, the shilling which the working man gives to the beggar does its dishonest and ruinous work of breeding beggars all the same. It is true that a tax, a beggar's beer tax, adds robbery of the working man to the injury done to the community, but the effect of the shilling is the same. . . .

If the tax is taken without unanimous consent, then it is sheer robbery, and dishonest in principle, if only one is robbed.

If it is given by unanimous consent, it is simply the old fallacy over again of the rich man preferring to breed beggars by giving shillings to beggars rather than bear the inconvenience of listening to their whining, meeting their violence, or investigating and correcting the cause of the evil.

Giving other people's money to any one excepting for service done is merely a form of setting up a beggar factory. What is wise to do is outside the scope of the present question, which is merely concerned with the dishonesty and proved unwisdom of tax-paid schooling, and the fact that it resolves itself into tax-paid beer.

To resume, no man has a right to take another man's life-work and live on it, or give it away, be he rich or poor, use sword or law, or taxation.

History supplies examples and warnings. The heathen empires for thousands of years went on one unvarying plan, whatever names they called themselves. They fought, they conquered, they made slaves, they lived on the work of their slaves. They were all narrow oligarchies living on slave work. The only difference between them was, whether the plunder was divided amongst a few, who called themselves an empire, or kingdom, or whether the plunder was divided amongst a greater number, who called themselves a republic. But few or many, empire or republic, they equally lived on plunder. And they all perished through the natural laws which, in a fair time, lynch a nation which robs and idles, as surely as honest settlers lynch a thief.

Modern democracy in its cruder forms of Socialism, Communism, and Trades' Unionism, is doing the same as the ancient empires did. The ancients wanted the strong to take the work of the weak, and they took it. The moderns want the strong to take the life-wage of the weak also. It makes no difference whether the strong is the poor robbing the rich, or the rich robbing the poor, or a general scramble by law or force. The takers of other people's goods get lynched in the end. There is, however, yet another example much more valuable than the two above-mentioned, which are so elementary that the babies of the world are always trying them. But a grand experiment has been made and has failed, which endeavoured to remedy the misery of the world by getting rid as far as possible of the consequences of evil, and the training of pain. The 1400 years during which Christianity in various ways, but more especially through the monasteries, mistook Christ's commands to love and give, and translated them not unnaturally into being kind without considering whether kindness

was love, and into giving without considering whether giving increased or diminished evil, have furnished everlasting proof that no man can do for another what that man ought to do for himself; and that no man can save another from the consequences of not doing it himself, when he ought to do it himself.

Modern governments and modern enthusiasts are now trying to do without religion by the strong right of majorities and taxation, what the mediæval world and the monk tried to do with a liberal heart and hand; this, it is true, soon degenerated into preying on the workers, which the modern panaceas begin by doing. These great examples deserve careful study, and practically exhaust the question.

If the whole community agrees to give in order to eliminate misery from the world, they are treading in the footsteps of the monasteries and mediæval failure, and breaking the great law, that suffering educates mankind.

If only a majority agree, and impose a tax, they are robbing the minority, as the heathen empires did, and taking other people's money to supply tax-paid beer. In either case it is a failure, a failure that experience has given proof of over and over again.

In the second case it is a dishonest failure.

So much on the elementary principles of honesty and dishonesty in dealing with poverty in a community by establishing tax-paid schools. This closes one side of the question. If time allows me, I hope later on to show, as an experienced schoolmaster, the deadly injury to schools and teaching that tax-paid rule inflicts.

The moment external law grasps schools and teaching, death becomes a mere question of time. The life goes out of them day by day, as a pitiless, omniscient, indiscriminating power lays down the lines to be followed, and executes every one who dares to diverge from omniscience.

To THE SAME.

February 1st, 1887.

I have endeavoured to put out clearly why I am utterly against free education by LAW. That is my contention, and the position I take up.

Law is deadly and immoral when it compels payment to those who give no return, and ultimately are undeserving. I am afraid I shall shock you very much by what I have sent, but we have bitter experience of law and compulsory support. It would take a book to treat of the question; I have only dealt briefly with one single head. If I find time to go on I will send you the results. It is exactly because I believe that I am "my brother's keeper" that I abhor law dealing with my brother's moral life. It kills the national feeling of brotherhood. Those who thrive give their tax and wash their hands of brotherhood. Those who receive claim it as a right because it is law, hate it because it soon becomes a pittance, and are at war with those above them for not giving more. Brotherhood vanishes.

Remember I, personally, staked my all, my very life, in the endeavour to raise the standard of school. I speak with confidence, as my conscience is clear.

I would help in every way.

I would have endowments.

I would encourage the brotherly feeling, and demand of it to be liberal and wise.

I would do everything to make education easy, and put teaching in the reach of all, except — kill brotherhood, by taking by force from my brother, and destroy liberality by robbing the possessor of his own, and quench love by saying, pay up your £1 and I give you a receipt in full for duty done.

Your arguments to me I heartily concur in. But then, they are arguments on my side for love against law. Be sure law slays love in a community.

#### TO THE SAME.

*February 25th, 1887.*

I have looked at your papers carefully, and I can only say that if you take the practical experience of England, and the facts of our world, you are advancing upon a most dangerous road.

I do not at all deny that your plan may at the beginning be good, even necessary, for a time. So were the monasteries, but I do say that unless changed, our experience cries

"ruin," even more emphatically than the principles do. I will, however, clear myself from the charge of being a "destroyer," and not a "builder-up," by stating first what I think ought to be done, and afterwards pointing out the objections to what is done.

Endowments ought to be given, and encouraged in every possible way, for first-rate education is so expensive that much help is needed. But in all instances, with two exceptions, which shall be mentioned presently, the main expense should be borne by the parents who use the schools. It is as much a parent's duty to provide mental as bodily food, and it would be as absurd for a parent to be content with what a tax-paying community thinks good education, if he can afford better, as to be content with the workhouse rations of a tax-paying community.

These endowments ought for all working purposes to be in the hands of the persons who work them, the skilled workmen, the teachers. Their expenditure and work should be subject to supervision either of trustees or other kinds of control, to see that the expenditure is not fraudulent or unduly wasteful, and that the work is up to a fair average. Anything in the way of interference beyond this is fatal.

The main lines on which the schools are to be carried on are fit subjects for legislation in the first instance.

The two exceptions to payment which are wise are, first, from the lowest school to the highest scholarships should be endowed in each school to enable their promising boys or girls to continue their education either in the school itself, or in a school of higher grade, or at a university, so that a promising pupil might go right up from the bottom to the top of the scale by his own exertions. I find four or five such scholarships quite as many as this school of 300 needs annually. Besides these, which are won by competition, every school ought to have privately the power of easing off the expenses of a small percentage of meritorious and needy boys whose brains do not make them prize-winners, but whose merits make them deserving. Then I agree also that the very poor should have just the elementary teaching of reading and writing provided for them gratis in a humble way, so as not to compete with any paying school.

That is the very briefest sketch of an educational system which will continue to work.

Now for the tax-paid school system from the school point of view :—

1. You lodge in the hands of the community the judgment on education. But how can the ignorant be fit judges of higher mind?

2. You put the teachers, the skilled workmen, under the lash of amateurs and very incompetent amateurs too.

3. You let authority decide the methods of teaching as well as what is to be taught. No original or new improvement which does not fall in with those methods is possible. But unless we are perfect in all we do, and the manner of doing it, this is fatal. Remember, I am not theorising ; I am speaking of the slavery we in England, with all our closely packed multitudes, and formalised traditions, are suffering. Your whip will be scorpions in time compared with ours, as we have had for centuries a better system going.

4. You prevent by all these chains the energy of individuals from starting different kinds of schools. Unless you are perfect this is fatal.

5. You dry up all the sources of life. We have in our poor law 300 years' experience to prove that as soon as the community is taxed to provide what the individual ought to do as a Christian duty, the individual pays his tax, and washes his hands and his conscience henceforth of the whole concern, and settles down to his selfishness in total and sublime forgetfulness of love and life and neighbourly duty ; all is dried up. The average middle-class Englishman simply wipes the poor clean out of his table of duties. "Why ! he has paid the poor-rate. There is the workhouse. What more pray do you expect ?" Then where are you to stop ? If mental food is supplied gratis, why not bodily food ? Some day that argument will be pushed home. Law destroys living individual effort. The despotism of republican laws can be far more despotic and omnipresent than the laws of a despot. The worst fetters are the dead hand on the heart, and when once external power controls the teaching it is the dead hand on the heart, for from the teaching the nation draws its life.

The tyranny is death. The moment examinations from

without are powerful enough to shape the work no real teaching progress is possible.

Religion must be treated as a by-subject of intellectual knowledge, as the differences in religious belief render state-paid religion in schools impossible. But religion is education.

The man who pays for tax-fed schools will not, and often cannot, pay also for a school of his religious cast; he has been crushed by law. So by degrees religion ceases to be thought of great importance. The nation is educated into thinking it by-play.

I quite agree with you that as a Christian I should rescue a child whatever his parents might be. I go so far as to tolerate a wise and guarded state law to do it. But Christian love working is not law. Law with us, as mentioned above, destroys the action of Christian love. The average man pays his tax and washes his hands of the concern when he has done so.

Also rescuing the pauper child from moral death is an utterly different thing from pauperising the poor and rich by maintaining children whose parents can and ought to do it.

The two propositions belong to two different worlds.

I am my brother's keeper.

But a law which forces me to keep the vices of my brother destroys the willingness to do it. And a law which even requires me to do what I would willingly do from love extinguishes love in ordinary cases.

You cannot whip a man into love and enthusiasm.

Believe me, we have bitter experience in England of what comes of substituting law for liberty, and we are going to have worse still in the matter of education. The slavery and triumphant praise of wrong methods is getting worse daily. I have no time to say more.

#### TO THE SAME.

March 16th, 1887.

As for agreeing, I don't think it signifies. We mean the same, and only differ as to how to carry out our meaning.

I just wish, though, I could put you for a little time into

the government vice here and give you a good squeeze. Our English experience of squeeze and meddle and muddle might save you over there much future trial. . . .

## TO THE SAME.

*March 22nd, 1887.*

You are welcome to publish my statement. Remember I think as strongly as any man living that it is the bounden duty of every Christian to endeavour to rescue the fallen, help all who need help, and be his brother's keeper. What I deny is, that this can be done by law. What I assert is, that law kills the Christian doing of it. . . . I entirely agree with everything you say about preventive methods, and the power of true education. Ignorance has been tried long enough. But the whole question is the question of law. Law compelling and, alas! griping and managing. We in Europe have deadly experience of what law means.

The moment law enters into the domain of life it kills, just as in a family there could be no love if law was called in, and the magistrate. Law is not Christian. It is a lower level. National life lasts so long that a few centuries give but little illustration of principles, which are also met by a thousand checks and counterchecks. But I see the attempt to do for others what they ought to do for themselves running in a line of ruin under different forms through all history. I see it blasting English life at the present moment, school life particularly. . . .

## TO E. F. BENNETT.

*August 17th, 1880.*

I congratulate you on the birth of your son and your wife's safety. That is my first answer to the big question you ask me. For it is a big question, though in its main lines clear enough. The answer turns on two things: First, what is meant by poor? Secondly, whether you want to live in God's world or man's world?

I mean by poor in the bad sense, a resourceless, selfish coward. The tramp is one end, the noble idler, however much money he may have, the other end of the word.

The poor man has no business to beget children. "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" is the sentence that has gone forth against all such, and their like, and in man's artificial world of cowardly wants, man condemns every one who troubles the routine theory of comfort. A man or woman is not poor who has a stout heart, faith in truth, and working power; as far as they fail in this they are poor. I mean, if a man is broken-hearted because he cannot continue on the same level of human fortune on which he started, or cannot bring up his children on the same level, although able to do Christian work, and to train them to do Christian work, so far he is poor, and ought not to risk a lot which he has not the courage to face; but sometimes these reverses come on man and woman after marriage. Well, it is God's message to them to arm for battle, to throw away worldly standards, and come weal come woe to quit themselves as good soldiers of Christ. I can assure you, though you may not think it, and perhaps may not believe it, I have drunk this cup to the very dregs, and drunk it during many years, and faced in heart all the shame, and all the bitterness, and very bad it tasted; but I would not give up the liberty and blessing and strength it gave for worlds. It is a long story, I cannot tell it you, but you may guess what a penniless man had to face, run heavily into debt by the first master he appointed, his family strong-willed, and not believing in his work, or his power, his masters much like dogs in couples with a rabbit started, his school authorities dead against him, etc. etc., forced to go on for years on the edge of ruin, single-handed, with no help. Well, don't get bitter. In God's world men are intended to get their daily bread from Him, to be dependent on Him every hour, to look up to Him for orders, and for wages evening by evening to the end. Man can die but once, and "how can men die better than facing fearful odds, for their wives and for their children, for their country, and their God." This belongs to civilians just as much as soldiers, and it belongs to every man who does honest work in God's world. . . .

## TO THE SAME.

*August 24th, 1880.*

There is no greater blessing than to have a true sympathy with toiling suffering humanity, to be able to feel *with* it, not *for* it. A world is split asunder in these two little words. But don't be embittered. Money is *not* power. Money can do nothing in the spirit world. If money was power our churches and hospitals and grand establishments would long ago have made the English world an earthly paradise, but a great cry of sorrow and crime below, and a great iciness of self-satisfaction and fault-finding above, protest against money being power. Feeling, spirit, heart sacrifice is power, *life* is power, and the beggary cannot be cured by money ; it can only be cured by life. The landlord can move obstacles out of the way of life, as a man can break down a dam in a river, or take stones out of its bed, but he cannot do anything to make the stream flow, if it is not there, excepting by pouring his own life in amongst the dry half-exhausted pools. It is one of God's great prison laws by which He coerces the world, when it won't be governed, that selfishness shall breed beggary. It is one of God's great remedial blessings, that this trial shall reach many who are able to see and feel it to be a blessing as well as a punishment, and who therefore are fitted to remove it.

I quite agree with what you say about the pothouse, but as long as the poor man *will* have the pothouse, the rich man cannot help him. Slaves make tyrants as much as tyrants make slaves. And it is a very difficult problem, when the slave has been made, how to unmake him again. But one thing is certain, the slave heart must be got rid of ; nothing else is of use.

My theory is, that the most religious thing that can be done now is to provide good amusements for the poor and educate them to use them. But unless you can make them support themselves, pay for them and by degrees start them themselves, little or nothing in my judgment has been done ; you can no more do another man's life for him than you can eat another man's dinner for him.

This truth is the foundation of all true work.

This truth is Christ working in the world on earth, instead of God giving men instruction from heaven.

Believe me, your new experience and opened eyes are a great blessing, though they smart perhaps furiously at present. I think Mr. —— is wrong in not removing unostentatiously every possible temptation from the boys. "Lead us not into temptation." Good government secretly has no belief whatever in honour and truth, is suspicious to the last degree in its precautions, and knows that the constant force of the stream (the constructional system) in time overcomes all the sinews of living effort, and that if the stream is a favouring of evil, a certain percentage of evil will come, which need not come. On the other hand, good government acts and behaves as if there was no such thing as dishonour and falsehood when it comes to deal with its human beings.

I do not understand great opportunities of evil without evil unless there is a wonderful perfection of life elsewhere, both in treatment, and structure and plant.

Neither do I understand how this is possible unless out of school is apparently perfect freedom.

It is exactly out of school where my system of making the society responsible for the individual has worked best and been most needed. The school understands that it has no business to stab, when it is only the friendly hand held out and the weapon put by the friendly power into the boy world that enables the boy to do it. Again, that boys should be punished as a society for what they have not done, is quite intelligible if boys, as a society, are rewarded for what they have not won. As to carpentry, etc., every fresh interest in a school is a fresh barrier against evil, and every fresh subject is a net which catches some one and educates those who are usually neglected and left to rot. But how far such things are practicable depends on the funds at disposal ; and in these days there is so much sham and scamped work and cheating in schools, that a school which tries to be true has a hard time of it, and must be prepared for great disappointment, and much calumny. But whatever versatile power is at the disposal of the school should be tried. In your case for one thing, I should try practical engineering and outdoor surveying work with the boys. I would make sculptors if I had the chance,

anything that called forth high power if I had the chance. Yet remember, the wise man does not work his theories, but his facts. The wise man takes into consideration the material he has to deal with, the instruments he has to use, and the temper that is in the air of our generation, and he will not attempt watchmaking with sledge-hammers, though he himself may be a watchmaker such as the world has not yet seen.

TO HIS MOTHER.

*November 18th, 1880.*

We are in the midst of building here, making a small transept to the chapel on the north side for the organ, and the trustees are going to have a swimming-bath built, and indeed, if things go well, every year will see some improvement in brick and mortar going on. It is very strange, how after so many years of a kind of prison life here, suddenly the barriers seem gone and a fresh power of new life in the place. I see clearly how necessary the difficulties and pain and disappointments were, but at the same time it is a great refreshment to have even a trembling hope of happier work, and more peaceful days.

TO REV. EDWARD WHITE.

*February 5th, 1881.*

I think if you are to do away with all subscriptions and tests, the power of rejecting false teachers must be increased in proportion. I tolerate any boy in my school, till we are absolutely unable to keep him, but I should not tolerate for an hour a master who set himself against the teaching and aim of the school.

There is no doubt that any man who tries to live the New Testament, and reads it for that purpose, will find it plain enough, whilst those who take it for a code to be known will find it tangled enough. Yet the life experience of experienced lives will always form a large part of the teaching and authority of the world. The thing is, men seek the web-spinning of the clever brain instead, and will insist on gathering apples of knowledge even from the branches of the tree of life. It

is very curious, did not one see the reason in the too common personal bitterness felt, how utterly strong words and feelings are tabooed. There is no personal hate in true strength of feeling. Again, it is so convenient when you want to get rid of a difficulty to imprison it. People nowadays put every living thought that burns into prison. In old days they caught a few thinkers and put them in ; the last stage is more deadly than the first.

I believe it to be a law of God's world that the living truth of any movement may be exactly measured by the amount of resistance, and dull obstruction, and bitter antagonism it has to encounter during its growth, and that debility in life is marked by easiness of progress in the first instance.

One reason that I should like to see you here is that we have many seed plants going both in town and school, new movements of life-power which are partly visible, and require to be seen, partly matters of principle which require to be talked and not written about.

To G. R. PARKIN.

May 7th, 1881.

I feel I ought to write again, as I was so downcast in my immediate feelings when I wrote my last letter that it might mislead you. Especially, it is not true that in case of my giving up Uppingham or Uppingham giving up me, "I know not where to lay my head." I have a small patrimony of my own, and though I should be very poor, I should not be homeless.

Moreover, I have the fullest belief, and what is more, a *real feeling* that neither I nor my family will ever greatly suffer because I have given up money and fortune for the truth's sake. I wish to make this *παλινωδία* to you, now that my better self has returned, and the immediate bitterness of the news has had time to settle. On consideration, I feel confident we shall not have a great reverse, but shall be protected in this our Sion, which with all its sins I more and more see daily, from what I find elsewhere, to be a solitary fortress in the land, a stronghold of true effort, which is found but faintly and doubtfully in other places.

Your success cheers me immensely. I see in it some touch of common life with us here—a giving and receiving of strength from one another, which makes me ashamed of looking on this narrow ditch in which I am digging as the world, and its clay banks as the horizon, and its muddy bottom as the end of all things. I congratulate you heartily. . . . But stick to your early principles. Don't sell your success. The temptation will come to grasp the crown by ever so little betrayal of the good old beginning. "Get thee behind me, Satan," be on your tongue, ready when the time comes. Remember, no compromise is possible with a principle, in details it is different. Stop short as much as you please; but never compromise. A fine piece of work must be perfect or it is nothing.

To REV. GODFREY THRING.

June 6th, 1881.

I was both amused and delighted with your wrath. I like a fellow who can get into an unselfish rage; it does me good to hear a little strong language in these days of one-sided evil-speaking, lying and slandering; when no one is allowed to call "a spade a spade" unless he is a *Liberal*! and your Liberal has no spades to call, only dung-forks, which those they hurl filth on must accept as agricultural amenities. For my part I like a good unselfish burst of wrath, and I believe it to be as wicked to bear false witness *for* your neighbour by soft words, as against him by hard. And I am not at all sure that we have not lost more by the false charity which will not call wickedness wicked, than by the old bigotry which gave the name so freely to good.

TO THE SAME.

November 16th, 1882.

I quite agree with you. A fellow in earnest wants all the help he can get, and a little good praise is a real boon, and a bit of solid ground to stand and work on an antidote to vanity; only fools are vain, even without a cause. . . . Be sure that no painting, no art work you could have done, by

any possibility could have been so powerful for good, or given you the niche you now occupy. As long as the English language lasts, sundry of your hymns will be read and sung, yea, even to the last day, and many a soul of God's best creatures thrill with your words. What more can a man want? Very likely if you had had all that old heathendom rammed into you, as I had, and all the literary artist slicing and pruning, and been scissored like me, you would just have lost the freshness and simple touch which make you what you are. No, my boy, I make a tidy schoolmaster and pass into the lives of many a pupil, and you live on the lips of the Church. So be satisfied. And what does it matter, if we do the Master's work?

To G. R. PARKIN.

BORTH, *August 11th, 1883.*

I have sent you off my new book on teaching. The University has turned it out very prettily, and I think you will like the inside. When once I was fairly in for it, it was a great refreshment to me writing it. The pent-up feelings and experiences of forty years came with a sense of relief to the point of the pen. I feel it is real and has life in it. I feel too that it is the only thing of the kind, and that some few will prize it as they did *Education and School*, but whether like *Education and School* it has not been born before its time or after cannot be known yet.

There is great dissatisfaction in England at present about education, but then there is a dense ignorance also, of the omniscient kind, and the ground is occupied thickly by expensive shams and false glory. I guess there is no room for my unwelcome truths, and that they will be crowded out like the seed that fell among the thorns. However, come good come ill, the deed is done, and the seed will not perish.

I have a great trouble coming which would once have been a great excitement, if not pleasure; our Tercentenary takes place next year, and there is to be a great gathering, and fuss, and subscriptions, and glorifications, and where poor truth is to find shelter in the midst of it, I don't know. I

think abuse is easier to manage than praise. If they understood at all what the work has been, and why it has been, there would be more hope; but they don't; and there is much idea of mere success, accompanied by all manner of petty interests and rivalries, in the air. I don't know what will come of it all. But it has to be gone through. I dare-say, like many, many other things, it will come off the reel naturally enough, and be far better than it looks now. Here at all events, at Borth, who am I to doubt and be faithless? The very stones on the beach would rise up against me. Nevertheless, one does not understand till one grows old, and cannot look indefinitely forward, how large a part hope played in the earlier days of trial.

To REV. GODFREY THRING.

April 9th, 1884.

My dear fellow, we must take life in a free, loving way, as sons in a father's home. Goodness knows what poor creatures we all are, but when we come to the loving heart, and when we see ourselves allowed to help on the life and love of Christ's kingdom, then however little our feelings may sometimes go with our convictions, we are sure that Christ is giving us His blessing, and making us His men, and accepting our lives.

To MISS MILLER.

June 23rd, 1885.

As I owe to Mr. Ruskin's *Modern Painters* more of thought and fruitful power than to any other book, or any other living man, I am not likely to speak or think of him with anything but feelings of gratitude and admiration. Nevertheless, in the grim battle of life I see oftentimes that strange discouragement follows on experiments where some brilliant truth is sent into the field with just a little falsity of an unpractical kind mixed up with it. Truth is strong; nothing living ever dies; but there is nothing weaker on earth than a truth out of due proportions; disease, I have been told, is only localised life. One rule, too, I have fixed

in my heart's core, "never to attack." Leave it to the scavengers of the world to cart away rubbish and glorify themselves in dust and destruction. But Ruskin is no scavenger. He has put forth more suggestive thought than any other man. I only know his *Fors Clavigera* by extracts. . . .

Though I am as strong as ever I was on the fact that the highest truth takes the highest body finally, and that the highest body is destined to enshrine the highest truth and tends to produce it. So rich and poor, and clergy and radicals and dissenters are fellow-men, struggling under difficult and varied conditions to better the world, and the lower moral and spiritual stratum of each section is vile, selfish, and blind. Consider what a vast amount of self-government is involved in the life of the rich. Self-control in food and drink, and desires of all sorts. The sharp-eyed Greek noted this, as he did most worldly facts, and said, "Right gracious is a home of ancient wealth; upstarts who never thought to reap fair crop are cruel wasters ever, and hard-eyed." If the rich did their duty thoroughly, there would be no misery. If the clergy did their duty thoroughly, there would be no misery. If every earnest worker worked, and never fought or attacked, the world would be much better. At least we should get rid of the idolatry of force, and not fall down on our knees before the fuddled giants who in their vanity-mad strength knock about their country as a drunken navvy does his wife.

Pray let me suggest to you two tests of the truth of work. One, Truth may be measured by the antagonism it excites in the world of respectability. Two, Highest Truth may be measured by the accusations against it of being opposite to what it is. Christ was condemned by the religious as a blasphemer; by the turbulent world as a rebel; the early Christians as murderers and sensualists. Be comforted; trials both make truth true, and prove it to the sufferers to be true.

I have read your *Training and Teaching*, and I need hardly say agree with it. That you know already. But I am less sanguine than you about getting a hearing, or doing any good here if one does, and perhaps a greater believer in life working through life slowly to more perfect life. I have seen in my thirty or forty years of work all I cared for and believed in in *Training and Teaching* killed by the dead

hand—the dead hand of amateur authority. On the other hand, I have seen many lives touched by life and new openings into all the world, windows out of which the dove flies and returns the sacred branch that tells of a new world of growth. Believe in work, in life. I believe in nothing else. So though I despair, I yet do not despair. I know there are seeds sown, and who can tell the future of a seed?

#### TO THE SAME.

PITLOCHRY, August 10th, 1885.

I do not agree with your and Mr. Ruskin's estimate of *Modern Painters*, and I gave him my grateful thanks for it the only time I met him. It is a noble book, and did noble work at the time, and will continue to do so. It did what I should have thought impossible; it smashed up for ever the narrow technicalities of artists, and altered the point of view not only for them, but for the whole world, and gave the seeing eye, and thought, and feeling a practical reality which they will never lose, but never had before. I do not, however, disparage his later work, of which I know comparatively little, not having read more than three or four volumes. But the fierce practical complexity of struggling humanity and its problems suffer more from any ignorance, or disregard of what is possible in human nature, than intellectual subjects outside the area of sin and suffering do. There is, however, sure to be much worth pondering and much to arouse a reflection in everything he writes. I, however, am grateful to him for having put me into a new world of observation, beauty, power, and progressive thought, which amounted to what I have called it—a new world; and every day adds to this obligation. . . .

#### TO MRS. CHARLES KINGSLEY.

January 18th, 1886.

The books have come, and I am very grateful to you for sending them, and for writing to me. I prize your autograph in the *Brave Words* very much. It cheers me much to find

myself, as life goes on, associated, however far off, with those who have worked for righteousness and striven for the good cause, as *he* did, a real pioneer. Your praise of my address is sweet to me. I felt a grim pleasure in uttering the pent-up feelings of my heart before an audience of modern educationalists after having seen all the principles I believe in, and staked my life to uphold, squeezed out of existence by the champions of progress. I am bound to say my words met with a good reception from my hearers. But I feel so out of the educational and school world that I have little heart to do anything but work; that, even, is done under great restraint. The prison closes in daily. I must be insolent enough to venture to approach you with unfeigned praise for the idea of "Daily Thoughts," and the carrying out of the idea. It is admirable. Your thinking me worthy of your personal confidence, and telling me about your sons and yourself, is very delightful to me; the more so because it is yet another instance of that spiritual telegraph which is for ever sending messages through the world from heart to heart, which the birds of the air stand on with senseless feet, and no one knows but those who receive the messages. I am astonished at the secret movements of the communion of the "Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets" in this strange world and all to whom the prophet voice is sweet. . . .

To J. CHURTON COLLINS.

June 7th, 1886.

I sent off by the early post a letter which you can make any use of you please, if it is not too late. You misunderstood me a little. I have no objection to fighting in the lost battle. It makes no difference to me whether the battle's lost or won when I go into battle. I believe in life. I believe in life in the end always winning, and if I fight I fight from belief in life, and am quite unconcerned at being a seed "which is not quickened unless it die."

But you will see when you have time to read my addresses that I am fighting on a different field, where I find less deadness; and, moreover, I do not think my name and experience worth much in the university world, and am disinclined to

mix myself up with their follies. As to science, is it not true, that with fine observation and skilful research, there never has been a time when the baby has been so pronounced in reasoning power? Science is, theoretically, established knowledge; but the modern men have beat the augurs in guessing, the astrologers in hunting hares in the sea, the gnostics in inventing worlds, and jumble up chains without links, and every conceivable form of illogical sequence, to say nothing of the amount of their own words they browse on. The collection of facts, as with the alchemists and astrologers, is wonderfully good, quite unrivalled, but their wielding of facts . . . .

It cheers me to think that I gave you help. All I can say is, for me life has unwound and disentangled itself day by day, light brightens on past pain, and as old age comes on, all things become more living, more real, and lead up to a perfect end.

TO THE SAME.

June 16th, 1886.

My dear son, as I would fain call you if you call me "master," yet without any idea of uttering a word, or breathing a breath, save only what you yourself invite. I have one negative creed. I loathe and abhor and renounce all *force*; physical or intellectual, it has no place in my world; it is the detested idolatry which my whole existence is set to undermine, therefore nothing can be further from my belief and practice than the thought of thrusting myself on you even by one poor word.

But your letter was very interesting to me, both from what you said of the high priests of force, and also from your acknowledgment of having received help from me, which came home to my inmost heart, and has induced me to write to you now. I write because you have been cheered by a few words of mine.

I write because, as life moved on, the most absolute certainty has come to me by living. If I were annihilated this moment, I should bless God for having been allowed to live. Far more, if I were to have to toil and suffer in this sorrowful but glorious earth-life through unnumbered ages, and the sorrow and suffering continued to bring the living

life with it that it has brought, I would gladly accept sorrow and suffering here on earth. How much more then, when I expect, and am sure, that a very few years more will place me with these precious life-powers in a world fitted for highest life, with life intensified, and all the pure great life of ages gathered there, besides those whom I have dearly loved and who have lived lovable lives. Yet now hear what, I think, gives me the right to speak as I am speaking, what at all events makes what I say something very different from a dreamer's dreams. There is such a fierce reality in it, though language can very little express the manifold and complex life which makes it so real, that I feel that, if body and soul were torn asunder bit by bit, each bit would still be a perfect conviction of the great feeling of immortal life and happy progress. I can fairly say that I started life after Cambridge in the front ranks of successful working-men, and felt no fear of anything—man, work, or danger. I can fairly say since then I have honestly faced every mental problem that has come before me—sceptical, agnostic, scientific, moral—and have successively dealt with each, mastered them, and assigned them their proper places. I believe, nay I am sure, that the world in which my spirit lives is constructed with a complete knowledge of all possible doubts and difficulties.

I have spoken of happy life. Well, I do not believe there lives on God's earth a man who has lived through more sorrow, shame, toil, danger, drags, and insult than I have. This I know, whatever tries other men, everything that had deadly power to try me came. For fifteen years, from thirty-three to forty-eight or fifty, I never knew real health, and had to work on in pain and weakness day by day. For thirty years the only thing I ever really longed for was *bed*. It sounds mean, I daresay it is mean, but it is true, and I wish to tell you the truth. Whatever joy or sorrow came, and there was much of both, the overwhelming sense of weariness and endless pain made bed, forgetfulness, the only human solace that satisfied. It is only in the last three years that I have begun to joy again in my waking life. Yet, strange contradiction to all this, one of those great contradictions which life and living harmonises—*solvuntur vivendo*—I count myself blessed to have

been allowed to live such a life. I cannot even now bear to think of living it over again, yet year by year, aye, day by day, I felt the warrior joy of life and the conqueror's joy of getting the mastery. In my worst agony I could not pray to have it taken away, so utterly by degrees did I feel the power and light that came. And now all creation has opened out to me by living, and everything that I count happy I know to have come out of the self-mastery and training and truth which those years of anguish brought. My positive creed is an absolute, unfaltering certainty of life triumphant.

I believe and know a Lord and Giver of Life. I feel Him working in and with me. I see Him in His world. I understand the world plan. I read the past and see the happy progress, whatever backwaters or eddies there may be in Life's great river. I see the future, and know what our own times mean, and in the rough what is coming, and whatever backwaters or eddies there may be whirling individuals or nations backward for a time in life's great river, I see the great river sweeping all on equally to a happy end. New revelations come as new facts rise, and daily awakenings into new existence, which the light already lighted casts light on and interprets.

My creed is life. Blessed is Life the King. Blessed is the life I have lived, yea, with all its depth of agony, blessed it was and blessed it is. Even on this earth blessed has been and is the gift of life, if there was nothing more to come. But blessed above all blessedness is the absolute certainty that *life cannot die*. No, not a living tear, nor a sigh of life perishes. It is all seed power ; it still lives somewhere, and, whilst I have my human follies and human feelings and can indeed rejoice and sorrow over the merest trifle, for it is of the nature of the keenest power to be most sensitive, nevertheless, whilst gaining happy enjoyment of trifles, every hour deepens and strengthens the sober conviction of being born at death into a nobler world and an immediate happy power of unhindered life. How I should like to talk over the plan of the world with you and its working.

In August and half September I shall be at Pitlochry, Perthshire, and shall be happy to put you up for a week. Then we should have leisure. If this is impossible, I would give you such time as I could get here before we break up in July.

## CHAPTER XV

### CORRESPONDENCE WITH MRS. EWING

1883-1885

A TOUCHING episode in Thring's later years was his friendship with the gifted writer of children's stories, Mrs. Ewing. It was curiously illustrative of his character and his views of life that he attached far more importance, as living and efficient forces in the world, to writings such as hers, with their beautiful and tender simplicity of spiritual teaching, than to the rougher and more forceful products of great intellectual power. He had for years admired the work done by Mrs. Ewing and her mother, Mrs. Gatty. "I marvel," he remarks, "at the state of English literary feeling that has not made her exquisite stories famous and her with them." Writing after her death to an American correspondent he says: "Mrs. Ewing was the daughter of Mrs. Gatty, author of *Parables of Nature*, the most beautiful book in its way in the English language. The mother and daughter have opened a new world of higher life and thought and feeling for mankind."

For several years, although they had never met, he kept up a correspondence with Mrs. Ewing. A

reviewer in the *Journal of Education* mentions that I do not refer to the beginning of this friendship and supplies the omission. I cannot do better than quote his words:—

“Thrинг’s little daughter complained one day to her father that *Aunt Judy* had come with no story in it by Mrs. Ewing. ‘Write and tell her so,’ said Thrинг. The child’s letter, not without compulsion, was written and sent, and some months later there came a letter from *Aunt Judy*, apologising for the delay, and containing a little apologue, all for Margaret herself, as good as any in *Aunt Judy’s Magazine*.” Before her work had achieved the great popularity which it finally gained he had perceived her power, had become her devoted literary admirer, and in moments of doubt and hesitation had given her encouragement which she valued greatly. He was wont to refer to her as the Queen of Story-tellers, and in the family circle at Uppingham she came to be familiarly spoken of as the “Queen.” He was in the habit of sending her his writings on educational questions, while she consulted him in regard to her literary work. The mutually helpful relations which existed between them are shown in their letters.

MRS. EWING TO REV. EDWARD THRING.

TAUNTON, October 7th, 1883.

I have had several reasons for purposing to write to you, and I hope you will forgive my delay in so doing. First and foremost is the kind gift of your book and the too kind inscription, which I will not deny pleases me—such is human vanity! Both I and Major Ewing have been reading it—the book, not the pretty speech—with great interest, and I am now looking forward to lending it to a very clever and pleasant

neighbour of ours, who is national school inspector here. He is genuinely interested in education, but I fancy is pretty representative of modern ideas, and I shall be curious to hear how your views hit him. . . . My sister tells me that you spoke of Somerset as your old country. I do hope that if in holiday times you drift back to your native soil you will give us the pleasure of a visit on your way. I can put up you and Mrs. Thring with fair comfort, and it would be a great pleasure to thank you both in person for the long-standing kindness and sympathy you have shown to me in my work. It is very helpful to be encouraged, and encouragement from you has value to stand against the fits of despondency in which I fear that, either from weakness of body or from a very much feebler order of intellect than I sometimes hoped had been committed to my use, I shall never be of any good to my generation. I have been partly hindered in writing to you from the pressure of vexatious business connected with a little story of mine, *Jackanapes*, which I have just brought out in separate form with seventeen illustrations by Caldecott—for 1s.—and of which I hope you have received a copy which I ordered to go to you more than a week ago. It is a favourite bit of work of mine, and I have been urged again and again to publish it cheap for boys. It has taken me three years to secure Mr. Caldecott (whose genius in his own line I reckon unique in his generation!). He is so busy and so fragile. But I did get him; and he has done nearly three times the number of designs the S.P.C.K. asked for, in his thoroughness and his kind wish to please me. I got Col. Deedes to admit him to the War Office to study uniforms of the periods; I have employed his own special engraver—the paper was made on purpose; I polished the text to my utmost, and now the S.P.C.K. says that “the Trade” says it is not worth a shilling! The secretary informs me that the booksellers refuse it *en masse*, and I must have it bound in coloured boards at once. The expense of this would just prevent my getting any profits from the sale, if it did not prove a standing loss on every thousand sold!!!

Now do you think I feel like a “Queen of Story-tellers”? I wonder what you think of the cost of it. I had a paper cover on purpose and put all the expense on fine paper, print,

and pictures within, in the ambitious hope that if I could coax R. C. to illustrate some other tales for me (and he is very kind to me), these one-shilling volumes might be bound by those who cared for them into a form fit for the only place where one would care to be shelved—the library. . . .

TO MRS. EWING.

*October 10th, 1883.*

I love *Jackanapes*; it is perfect, and I cordially agree with you that Caldecott is unique; his women make one draw one's breath from the charm of their pure and exquisite loveliness, and his horsemen ride as never men have ridden in picture or marble before. I know him slightly. He married the sister of one of my boys, and has been here. The blackbird in the school aviary here sat to him for his immortal pie book, unconscious of his glory. . . . It may console you to know . . . that I have never got a penny by my writings. But you ought to. . . . Never mind, you *are* the queen of story-tellers, and you have given to numbers, myself included, holy and pure refreshment from a living fountain. . . . Be of good cheer—your generation would miss you sorely with your tender feeling and delicate simplicity of touch. I am convinced that everything truly original *must* in every instance feel that it is perishing in the lost battle; but for all that, the lost battle of one generation in the kingdom of life is the victory of the next, and the cross in all things is the step to the throne.

I am glad to hear your nephew is happy here. I staked my life on the endeavour to make boy life better, higher, and happier, and I rejoice at every evidence that the leaven works. But I too feel to my heart's core the truths I would fain cheer you with. I am called successful, and in a sense I am, but I absolutely despair of English higher education; all I care for, all I believe in, all I have poured out my life to save, has during the last thirty years been in process of destruction by authority; the future looks hopeless, and whatever man can suffer of shame and pain and ruin I may say I have suffered and feared in this place.

But truth lives—life cannot be destroyed, and I catch glimpses from time to time of far-off openings into light, as I doubt not, with all your fits of despondency, you do at times. It was precisely because I felt you belonged to the living who get but scant measure from their generation, and feel keenly that it is so, that has drawn me on to do what I could to make you strong in conscious success. Believe me, resolute as I am thought to be, and have indeed borne myself in this fierce battle, a more miserable coward in inward fear and sensitiveness does not exist. I have sometimes in my emptiness almost wished some one would march me out, send a volley into me, and shy me into the nearest ditch, rather than go on in my weakness. . . .

MRS. EWING TO REV. E. THRING.

*Epiphany, 1884.*

I've been a good deal "driven" lately. Some most desperate struggles over the business part of *Jackanapes*, which I hope now is fairly settled. It's not easy to me, constitutionally, so to speak, to put my foot down, but I have done it on one or two points, and they have been yielded with magic rapidity. Perhaps the latest news from S.P.C.K. has something to do with this, viz. that they were selling it "at the rate of 500 a day." Nineteen thousand have been ordered already, and the printers can't get them out fast enough. This, of course, is not likely to go on after Christmas, but it may fairly be called a success, and as "after the event" no one is likely to say kinder things of that favourite child of my brain than you said before it, there is no one to whom I am more glad to say that it is doing well.

But I never was more harassed about anything! and now—when for a few hours printers, publishers, and binders have paused in their attacks—an elderly clergyman from the neighbourhood of Barnsley writes to ask S.P.C.K. if it is aware that in a publication called *Jackanapes* occurs language inconsistent with the third commandment, and S.P.C.K. forwards to me, and "pause for a reply."

If you can conceive what it is to explain matters satisfac-

torily to an excellent gentleman who thinks "what the deuce" is taking the Lord's name in vain, who draws and perceives no distinction between what I speak *in propria persona*, and that I put into the mouth of an old soldier of 1815, and who, to crown all, is obviously of so entirely an unliterary type that he would probably willingly exclude Scott and Shakespeare from a boy's library, from any Christian's library, if he could retain the tracts of Dublin Repository, you will know what is before me! By last night's post I got a Union Jack from Portsmouth from a fervid admirer who says Caldecott has done it wrong and wants it corrected in future editions. I believe it wouldn't be a bad plan to send an essay on profane swearing to the flag people, and one on the history of the flag that braved one thousand years to the punctilious parson, and refuse to recognise the error. It might widen both points of view!

I'm very tired, and I must go to bed. I do wish you and yours every blessing and joy for 1884, and I renew sincerely my thanks for your unfailing cheer to my onward way.

TO MRS. EWING.

(*No date.*)

I have got *Jackanapes*. I wish if you are ever good enough to send me another of your works you would write my name in it yourself. Mrs. Thring (whose eyes do not allow her to read much) could not get any of the family to undertake to read it to her unless quite alone, from their feelings. A slight compromise was effected at last by changing the reader and partial privacy, and we got through it at intervals. I took the liberty as I was giving a lecture to the school last week to give you your queenly honour, and inform them that if I had the power I would make every man jack of them buy *Jackanapes*, and I have followed it up by making our bookseller get down fifty copies at once and dispose them all over the shop window. I like the paper cover with its design far better than boards. O Queen, live for ever! Long enough at least, I hope, to trample on the publishers.

Though thus corresponding on terms of intimate

friendship, it happened by a singular series of chances that the meeting with each other which they had long wished for and several times arranged never took place until Mrs. Ewing was suffering from the illness which soon after ended her life.

The circumstances under which they then at last met made a profound impression upon Thring. Mrs. Ewing was then staying at Bath, and Thring, going to Somersetshire for the Easter holiday of 1885, stayed over to see her.

Next day I went to see Mrs. Ewing. She was very ill, but I was admitted, and I shall never forget her. I held it the honour of my life to have been received by her as a very dear friend, though she had never seen me before. She lay so wasted and so pale, more than pale; but as soon as she looked up the great eyes filled with light, and the whole face became a presence of light, not a face, and we had a few minutes (to me) of happy talk, and she asked me to say the Lord's Prayer, which I did, with her wasted hands in mine, and then I left her. I thank God for having allowed me the dear privilege of seeing her and comforting her. I went back on Monday and saw her again. She had had a very bad night, and her seeing me at all was a sign of the most perfect affection.<sup>1</sup>

*May 7th.*—I pray daily that she may be raised up again to prophesy the tender things of God's life which He has taught her to speak. She is better, I am thankful to say,

<sup>1</sup> "Of what may be termed external spiritual privileges she did not have many, but she derived much comfort from an unexpected visitor. During nine years previously she had known the Rev. Edward Thring as a correspondent, but they had not met face to face, though they had tried on several occasions to do so. Now, when their chances of meeting were nearly gone, he came and gave great consolation by his unravelling of the mystery of suffering, and its sanctifying power, as also by his interpretation that the life which we are meant to lead under the dispensation of the Spirit who has been given for our guidance into truth, is one which does not take us out of the world but keeps us from its evil, enabling us to lead a heavenly existence on earth, and so to span over the chasm which divides us from heaven."—*Memoir of Mrs. Ewing*, by her Sister.

and I begin to have a real hope that she will be given back to us.

On his return to Uppingham he writes to Miss Gatty :—

*May 11th, 1885.*—I hope you have got over the removal successfully, and that your sister, though she may miss her little birds and nest, has a more cheery view and can enjoy it. I pray for her daily many times.

I had no idea of my Address being read to her even, much less of her reading it; but I sent it as a token of fealty to "my Queen," as a faithful subject should, and also the sermon which comes now. The whole family, who are most loyal to the Queen of Story-land, myself included, are busy to-day gathering their best flowers for our queen. Mrs. Thrings specially sends the lilies of the valley, which are her own pet possession. I hope my queen is winning her Victoria Cross, and gathering in all manner of tender, delicate experience of life and God and the Holy Spirit which, I pray, may, in years to come, be a light in her heart. Give her my love, if she will accept it.

*May 12th.*—Yesterday we gathered a nice lot of flowers and sent them down to Mrs. Ewing. The whole family are her most loyal subjects, and I hope my queen will be pleased. How I trust and pray she may be restored to health and strength to prophesy her sweet tender messages of delicate life, of which God has made her His prophetess. I feel greatly honoured by her affection, and consecrated by it to a higher and purer life. When I look back it astonishes me to find how many years she has been an ideal in my mind, and her mother before her. And now I can give pleasure and help to my Queen of Story-land.

*May 13th.*—Alas! our flowers will not be seen by my queen. Very anxious news came this morning, that she has had to undergo a most painful operation, and is, I fear, hovering between life and death; at all events, beyond the reach of our flowers, or anything but our prayers. I have felt to-day like one moving in a dream. I can but pray, but my heart is very low.

*May 14th.*—Ascension Day. Yes, my queen is dead. Yesterday morning about eight o'clock her gentle spirit passed away peacefully, and the sweet voice is stilled on earth for ever. Yet it speaks on for ever too. What a light has gone out, and how few comparatively heed it! Though many will think of her loss, few will feel that her powers of tender inspiration were matchless, never seen before, and never to be surpassed in delicate life, in that breathing of the Holy Spirit which is living by its life, and by nothing but life. O my queen! my queen! A strange mystery to me hangs over our intercourse. The power I was able to be to her at a trying time, the not being allowed to see her two years following, and then admitted to her dying bed, for such it was. I feel as if I was consecrated to some work to be done through her affection. At all events, it is a strange mysterious feeling of expectancy on me, and a call to a higher life and more spiritual devotion.

*Monday, 18th.*—How strange this modern life is! Since I last wrote, besides much else I have travelled 540 miles. On Friday morning when I came out of first school, I found a letter from Mrs. Smith, her sister, saying, that if I would come, there was no one her family would more wish to take part in the last offices than myself. . . . Soldiers bore her to her grave in the quiet country churchyard. It was a most beautiful morning. The grave was lined with moss and lovely flowers, and the coffin buried in crosses and wreaths of most beautiful blossoms.<sup>1</sup> I read the service by their wish from the lesson inclusive to the end, and the last sight was this glorious heap of flowers, fit type of a life crowned. Never shall I have such honour as the being associated with her last hours and her last earthly life, our flowers gathered in gladness for her life crowned her as she lay on her last bed, and were even in her hands, fit type once more of the

<sup>1</sup> "On the 16th of May she was buried in her parish churchyard of Trull, near Taunton, in a grave literally lined with moss and flowers; and so many floral wreaths and crosses were sent from all parts of England that when the grave was filled up they entirely covered it, not a speck of soil could be seen; her first sleep in mother earth was beneath a coverlet of fragrant white blossoms."—*Memoir of Mrs. Ewing*, by her Sister.

gladness that should be of the living life departed to Christ. *Latet sorte mea*<sup>1</sup> came in just before the last operation. It had been looked on as an omen ; rather I look on it as a message from the world of truth sent us for blessings. . . . Altogether I feel consecrated and raised into a higher world by this wondrous union at the last with her, the pure and inspired prophetess of God's life to men.

Returning from the funeral he travelled with a dear friend of Mrs. Ewing whom he had met at her home.

To MRS. JELF.

May 20th, 1885.

I venture to send you the writings I spoke of on our most interesting journey. The sermons and the fragment of print, and part of the *Charter of Life* deal with *value*. The *Charter of Life* itself, though addressed to men originally, is eminently one for women to read, and I personally feel intensely strongly that woman's mission is there laid down, and the grand revelation of the Bride are the *truths on which the practice of the world hinges*. The President's address I send to please myself, because I wish you to read it, as I am amused and interested in having officially delivered myself of such unfashionable doctrines. Indeed, I please myself exceedingly in sending them all—first, because it is a pleasure to me, a great pleasure, to offer you anything ; and secondly, because it is a great pleasure to me to be admitted to your intimacy and to exchange thoughts. I feel a kind of sacred bond in our having met where, and how, we did ; even as I feel that the strange manner in which I was brought near my queen at the last remains for ever with me as a kind of consecration of my life. I did not know till now how large a space she filled in my thoughts, and has done for years.

To THE SAME.

May 25th, 1885.

The world does feel very empty to me just now. I did not know till quite lately for how many many years first her

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Ewing's last book, *The Story of a Short Life*.

mother, and then herself, had been the central ideal in my heart of gracious womanhood. A great prophetess of God's tenderest inspired life has gone from us. O my queen! my queen! But what right have we to mourn on Ascension Day, with *lætus sorte mea* as the last message from her? But I cannot joy yet. I will strive to be holier and better, and above all, to reverence and uphold womanhood as a true vassal of "the Bride," from having been allowed to know her, and love her, and see her.

The diary says:—

*May 23rd.*—A hard week over. A week since I laid my queen amidst the flowers in her last earthly home. . . . My whole life rises at the thought of being associated with her last earthly hours. . . . Altogether my lower heart is heavy, whilst my higher heart is full of new faith and peace, and nobler life and happier patience.

*May 24th.*—A week over that I shall long remember. I have not gathered my senses yet in the great rush of feeling and the mystery of life, with the hard, fixed, daily work crushing in on it with such merciless sternness, seemingly so commonplace or coarse, but really God's law of life to be obeyed. I began reading *Lætus sorte mea* again to-night, and at first could scarcely get on through the mist of tears, but I was strangely comforted as I read. It was indeed a message from the other world to us. . . .

*May 29th.*—I have been reading *Lætus*. My whole world has altered, and I am in a newer, higher, purer, and more unselfish world. There is a strange mixture of pain and happiness, of death and Paradise in it; and strange purity too of motives and thoughts not of earth. . . . But above all things I am striving to be *Lætus sorte mea*, and to have no more repinings or unsettled wishes, and plans or fear or disappointment. Airs of Paradise are nearer than ever before. I am *Lætus*.

*June 2nd.*—I am in a new world and a higher world. The utter ignorance and abasement I feel about all life and its mysteries is to me a most blessed result, when I consider how I once prayed against positiveness. And then, on the other

hand, comes the strange practical fact that all the lines of the practical life are as positive as ever, and the hard task is done with the hard firm hand as if there was no uncertainty in the world. Such is the Christian solution of life; absolute weakness and humility and tenderness coexistent with a resolute acting power of unflinching clearness. All day long *Laetus sorte mea* is in my thoughts. I have not been as faithful as I ought to have been to that glorious gift of Christ.

To H. P. CHANDLER.

*July 23rd, 1885.*

Yes. I knew Mrs. Ewing, whom I regard in my sober judgment as an experienced judge of literature, to be absolutely supreme in the art of story-telling; the queen, like whom there never has been any writer, and never will be, so pure, so translucent, such exquisite perfection of pellucid life flowing from heart to heart; such a breath of Paradise, divine, because it comes with life from a holy home, not because it speaks of holiness. I will see that you have the best portrait sent you. A touching little biography of her is coming out now in *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, written by her sister. I do not know anything else you could get. I know Randolph Caldecott also slightly. But I do not think there is any account of him anywhere. . . .

TO THE SAME.

My friendship with Mrs. Ewing and the close ties which on her deathbed became mine are one of the happinesses of my life. I rejoice at every opportunity of making her work known. Wherever her writings and those of her mother, Mrs. Gatty, *Parables of Nature*, etc., penetrate, there is a stream of purifying life to refresh mankind. Her life was the most perfect loveliness of life as life I ever knew or dreamt of. I send you in case I have not done so before a sermon of which she was the involuntary theme. I dislike funeral sermons. I did not intend to preach one, but it came. . . .

## TO A FRIEND.

*September 10th, 1885.*

Your letter chimed in marvellously with my present state of mind. I have always felt intensely how little our life turns on knowledge, but Mrs. Ewing's departure, and the strange association with her in death which was given me, has entirely lifted me into a higher world, and been a sort of consecration of my feelings and life. The circumstances were so strange that they impressed me more than I can tell, and the concurrent influences all converging to one point of pre-eminent nearness to her in her last hours, and her grave, though we did not, and could not, so it seemed, meet before, opened the coming world to me in a more living way than ever before; and I feel with you in your thoughts of a glory cut short here. May it not be because some special work is required to be done there?

## CHAPTER XVI

“WORK TILL THE END OF LIFE, AND LIFE TILL  
THE END OF WORK”

1887

THE year 1887, the last year of Thring's life, opened with much private care and anxiety pressing upon him, in addition to his public work. The spring of that iron will which had carried him through so much was beginning to relax. He was not a very old man; as the traditions of his family went he was comparatively young. But he had done work to fill a much longer life, and the pace was beginning to tell.

“This term,” he says in January, “opens with fear and pain. I know nothing. Life is too powerful for me. I only see Thee, O God, working in the midst of the storm. Have mercy on us all, I beseech Thee. . . . One thing I see clearly, as I have often seen before, that if one does work with a single eye every conceivable disparaging or evil motive will be imputed, starting from the calumny of the idle, that the labour you have trained yourself through years of self-denial to perform without flinching is what you like, forsooth! God help us.”

And again :—

Altogether I am in a boat on a stormy sea. But I have

two strong trusts. Sure I am that we have striven with a single heart to do God's work here ; sure I am that He has accepted it, and that my children will never suffer for what we have done for God.

Herein lay the chief secret of his trouble. What he had faced for himself with courage and faith was not so easy to face as his strength grew less for those who leaned upon him. Very human is the thought which he mentions as passing through his mind when he heard of the great material success which had crowned the labours of an old acquaintance.

*January 25th, 1887.*—I could not help for a moment contrasting the treatment my public work has received, and what his private work has gained. It is all very well, but a verse in the Psalms is one thing, and that verse translated into — rich and prosperous, in the face of my torture and many cares, is another. But an hour or so set all right again. I am well content. *Laetus sorte mea*, Come weal, come woe. I have learnt to see how much whipping one wants. "It is good for me that I have been in trouble," and we often forget that trouble would not be trouble if it only attacked one's strong points. Trouble means the blow on a sore place. God's will be done with me and mine.

It was at this time that he decided, under the pressure of anxiety, and more or less, I think, unnerved by it, to ask his trustees for an increase of salary, to which he believed he was in law and equity entitled. The scheme by which the school was governed provided for a minimum and maximum proportion of the fees which might be assigned to the headmaster. For two years only, after the Borth period, the maximum proportion was granted him ; now he asked that it might be given him for the remainder of his headmastership. He believed that his long service entitled him to make this request. Few will be disposed to doubt the strength

of such a claim. After some months of consideration it was refused.

To set off against the cares which weighed upon him, and the work which was exhausting him, were many cheering messages from distant lands. "My lecture as President of the Education Society has been translated into German, and published in one of their educational magazines." He hears that some of his addresses have been republished in Canada; an article on Uppingham and his work had been accepted by the *Century Magazine* in New York; an Australian teacher writes to make inquiries about his school music; visitors from America come to study his work at Uppingham, and they tell him that he would be surprised to know how much his views are discussed among transatlantic teachers.

*February 24th.*—I have undertaken to write an address for the High School teachers next term; also next week to speak to an assembly—a club, I believe, of the Newnham girls. It is curious how Mrs. Ewing's life and memory have set me going on all this woman's work, which I believe to be the most important step in practical life.

*March 2nd.*—Vivian Skrine and Mr. Hartley here from Poplar to-night. They gave the school an excellent, simple, strong account of the life there and its difficulties. I feel it a great boon to have such a breath of true life sent into the school.

*March 16th.*—The confirmation over, and everything most good. The service was very impressive, and the bishop gave us an excellent address. This morning a cheering letter from Mr. Hyde of St. Cloud in America asking me to write a song for his Normal School class, and in other ways giving me glimpses of the power God has given into my hands for true life. It is very wonderful the way life vibrates through the world in these days. To-night I give my last address, and then every boy in the school will once more have been spoken to as a soldier of Christ. Amen.

*March 21st.*—A great communion yesterday, solemn and blessed. Yet it is curious to know how weak the sense of Christian brotherhood is, and how little the community, the loyalty to one body, is felt. At least thirty of our communicants were absent in spite of the address, and the strong way in which I laid down the need of communion. Nothing moved them ; they did not come.

*March 22nd.*—For the first time for weeks I am not hunted by work. Hope to do my education guild lecture leisurely to-morrow. I thank God with all my heart for the peace He gives my spirit in spite of many troubles, and for the inspiration He gives me, and freshness of work and inward power. It is very strange the feeling of the gift, and very comforting.

*April 11th.*—Easter Sunday over ; a great epoch always. We had such a communion, I am thankful to say, as I have scarcely ever had before. I think 180 boys must have actually been there.

*May 22nd.*—A most strange experience. My soldier friend of the Welsh Fusiliers, writing to me yesterday, said he knew about me long ago, as in Australia — (naming one of the greatest reprobates we have ever turned out) had taught many to love and revere my name. It is marvellous. Truly, life is better than writing, as I have always thought, and if God has made my life live in this way, then the thoughts ready to be written, but for the press of work, may well perish unwritten. Also, they have been born out of the work. Heard this morning that we shall have seventy headmistresses here on the 10th and 11th.

. . . A long extract from the diary of dear old Swinny from Lake Nyassa—an account of the first journey through the country he described that has reached England, I take it. This is very full of life. How rich life is becoming in messages of life ! I move about in a kind of dream sometimes, so strangely does the reality of the spirit world contrast with the lower reality of this bodily world.

*May 24th.*—It is more dream-like than ever. Yesterday at ten o'clock I spoke to the school with pride of dear old Swinny's journal, and I meant to have written a cheery letter to him that very day, when on coming out of school I was met by the news that he was dead. Alas ! my brother. How I shall miss in my daily prayers the thought of your affectionate,

true heart and simple manliness. A finer specimen of an English nobleman it would be hard to find. Now he has joined Alington.

. . . How mysteriously things work, and with what mysterious coincidences of good and evil the events move on side to side—a divine harmony of blessings set over against the troubles.

*May 29th.*—Yesterday I had a letter from the chairman of my teachers' guild meeting enclosing one from Max Müller, expressing unqualified praise of my lecture; also telling me that Pritchard, the astronomer and writer, had written equally warmly about it. This is cheering. . . . I have practically finished my address to the headmistresses. A wonderful relief to have it off my mind. The pace this term has been severe. . . .

The work was never so severe, however, as to lessen his interest in the smallest boy with whom he had to do.

Such a nice essay from a little boy in P——'s form, full of misspellings and sentences which are not sentences, but full also of life, having thoroughly grasped in a boyish way the life-problems discussed.

*June 8th.*—The most honourable, touching, and prettiest thing, I believe, that ever happened to me happened to-day. The two little B——s, whose father is in India, who came this term, rang the bell this morning, and were shown into the study where I was, and then they brought out their father's letter, and said they could not read it, and asked if I would read it to them, which I did. To think that these boys would come to me (they are not in my house yet, though I told them I would do my best for them when they came) to read their father's letter for them, after they had been here a month, quite long enough to get over the new boy, is something glorious. How it shows what a kindly feeling there must be in the school as a whole to make it possible. It is a great honour to have been allowed to inspire such a trustful feeling. How it sweetens this hard life. I will set it down against the trustees. . . .

It was characteristic of the man that almost as much space is devoted in his diary to the incident just recorded as to the important public event which took place on the two following days, and of which something must now be said.

We have seen that the conference of headmasters was summoned to meet at Uppingham in 1869 with many anxious questionings about the response that would be made to the invitation. In the years that followed, the wisdom of that venture had been proved. The conference had given rise to much sympathetic and useful interchange of thought, and had broken down the ancient isolation of the greater schools. But in these same years new and powerful educational forces had come into play. Among the most interesting were those directed to the higher education of girls. Under the leadership of women like Miss Buss and Miss Beale much progress had been made ; the high schools and colleges for girls were becoming a power in the land, and the impulse was extending to the universities. The leaders of the movement had much indifference and prejudice to combat, but they had no ancient traditions to hinder them from recognising the value of intercourse and co-operation. The tardy example of the headmasters had been promptly followed, and a headmistresses' conference had been organised to give unity and greater efficiency to the new movement.

It was therefore singularly appropriate that now in 1887 Thring should invite the headmistresses to hold their annual meeting at Uppingham. He had hailed with the greatest satisfaction this fresh growth of genuine teaching life. To woman's education on womanly lines he attached supreme importance. That the first ten years of the child-life of all mankind age after age

passes continuously through the hands of women seemed to him one of the most significant facts in the whole range of human affairs. Character power and the perfection of trained skill were alike the need of those whose work was to mould character when most ready to receive impressions.

No training could be too complete for those marked out by nature as the guides and teachers of all childhood, if only the training were true and working towards true ends.

It was chiefly with the desire to give such public recognition as was in his power to earnest workers in a good but still struggling cause that he asked the headmistresses to Uppingham. He felt that the old education should extend a hand of hearty and helpful welcome to the new, and he wished to give to his co-labourers the best that he had to give. Of true work and working machinery he could show them much at Uppingham. Of the spirit in which his work had been done they might catch something ; he could outline for them the lofty ideal he had conceived of their work. So the invitation was given and gladly accepted. It was a delicate touch of sympathy, slight and simple enough in itself, but one that no headmaster had thought of before, nor, I believe, has it found imitation since.

Of his thought about the meeting he writes to his friend, Professor Felméri, in Hungary :—

*Jan. 3rd, 1887.*—I am very much interested in the education of women, the queens of life, sent to teach us how much more powerful, lovable, and lovely weakness is than brute force either of hand or head, and I shall do all I can to put it in a right channel. This summer, if all's well, the Conference of the London Society of Schoolmistresses will, by my invitation,

meet at Uppingham,—some eighty ladies—mistresses of high schools from various parts of England. They were greatly pleased at being invited ; it will be very interesting, and I think much good will come of it. . . .

After the meeting he says :—

I have delayed answering until I could send you a copy of my address to the headmistresses—the lady teachers of England—who held their annual conference at Uppingham this year by my invitation. It was a grand day. Fifty-nine actually came, and we did all in our power to honour them. We put them all up, feted them, gave them a concert, and in all ways entertained them as royally as we could. It was the first official recognition they had had, which made it the more important, and a greater pleasure to all parties. They were a delightful company, entirely free from all nonsense ; not a trace of "woman's rights" among them, but most sensible, sober-minded workers and thinkers. . . . Everything went off with the most splendid success ; and a very remarkable set of able and interesting women they were. . . . They have all now gone, but I feel the great importance of the meeting more and more as I gather my thoughts after it. . . .

In his address to the conference he referred to the headmasters' meeting held in the same place eighteen years earlier :—

I hold it to be a most happy omen that this same room should have the honour of being the first schoolroom of our public schools for boys to welcome you and your conference to-day. A most happy omen, when I look back and consider what a little seed was sown in December 1869, and then reflect how different in power and place, how important your assembly is as compared with our weak little life-germ ; and I may add, in the highest sense truer and better than anything we masters could set on foot. Both because the rough, instrumental work of the world is done by men, whilst the fine and delicate life-power, with its influence on life, is done by the women ; and also because you are fresh, and enthusiastic,

and comparatively untrammelled, whilst we are weighed down by tradition, cast, like iron, in the rigid moulds of the past, with still heavier chains of modern improvement imposed by present law on our life. The hope of teaching lies in you.

One other passage may be quoted, as illustrating the views which he held of woman's true relation to men in carrying on the work of the world.

There is another eternal fact equally unforgetable when once seen—the eternal fact of helpfulness, which is yours. The divine privilege of being helpers. Woman was created to help—to make good, that is, the deficiencies of the world of man ; to come in in times of strain and trial to relieve and cheer ; to take, as it were, on themselves the part of angels on earth, ministering spirits, good Samaritans to succour the wounded, standing somewhat apart from the fray, to bring hope, and kindly, gentle support ; in a word, "helps meet for man." And here, again, we meet the double truth which has attended us all along, of a higher and more sovereign influence, committed to your hands, and of true working power—the truth, which this conference embodies, of trained working skill. For how can they help who know not how to work ? We meet again the truth, which has accompanied us from the beginning, that man in no mean spirit is intended to do the rough work of the world, while it is the divine mission of women to follow on his work, to put the finishing touches, to help, and bind up, and soothe, and cheer, and throw a halo of gentler life round this hard, warring, daily contest of good and evil struggling and toiling in their pain. Work-power is wanted. You are busy in giving it ; but it is helpful work-power, not destroying ; gentle work-power, not forceful.

After the conference the diary says :—

*June 11th.*—These two most important days come and gone. Everything went off most beautifully. The ladies were exceedingly gratified by their entertainment, and our masters and the school ladies, I believe, quite as much so. . . . The conversazione and music were perfect. It seems strange that there should be so little to say of what I believe it to be

—one of the most important things we have ever done. . . . Thank God for His goodness.

*June 12th.*—The more I gather my thoughts after the great meeting of last week the more important does it all appear to me. It is a great epoch to them and to us. I do believe life has been breathed into the body of masters, and that they are conscious of a new atmosphere. . . .

It is all like a dream the work of last week, and its life-power, but a dream that supports wonderfully. . . .

Many letters remain to show how much their reception, the school itself, and its headmaster, impressed the visitors. In sending a beautiful edition of Ruskin's works as a memento of the visit, Miss Buss, the President of the Conference, writes :—

*June 13th, 1887.*—It gives me great pleasure to be requested by the Association of Headmistresses to ask you to accept for your library a few books, in remembrance of our visit to Uppingham, on the 10th and 11th inst., a visit which has been a source of great interest and enjoyment to us. It ought not to pass without leaving a token in your possession, for it is an event in educational history of no small significance.

We, who have worked so long and aspired so constantly to raise girls' education to a higher level, have often felt the need of more direct encouragement and a fuller faith in our endeavour, on the part of men engaged in similar work.

We may therefore very fitly mark as a red-letter day in the educational calendar the day on which one of the leading headmasters of the country entertained the headmistresses at their conference in his school.

Miss Beale, writing from Cheltenham, says :—

*June 1887.*—I felt at the last quite incapable of saying anything—the early service—the address—church, which made one feel all that suffering had wrought out—and then that very beautiful concluding address wrought up one's feelings, so that I could not trust myself to try to say how grateful we felt—how glad to feel that there is such an influence, such

a spirit at work in Uppingham: it is one thing to read and hear about it, and another to see and feel it. . . .

Others felt no less warmly.

*July 6th.*—My visit to Uppingham will always be one of my happiest memories. It was most helpful and encouraging to see your beautiful school, and to feel that you sympathised with us in our work amongst the girls, and so cordially held out the right hand of fellowship towards us. No school has ever impressed me like Uppingham. Other schools may be bodies corporate, but Uppingham has a soul.

*July 11th.*—You will let me tell you what a great pleasure it has been to me to be allowed to know a little of you and your work. Your thrilling words will linger in the memory of many of us, and will, I hope, stir us up to be true to what we must have felt in our hearts to be the only principles of education worth working for. Many thanks for all you have done for one at least of your audience.

*July 12th.*—May I take this opportunity of saying how often your books have reinspired me with fresh hope. And when I see a mistress flagging, through some disappointment in a pupil, of whom we had hoped much, my one thought is to lend her one of your books in order that she may take heart and seek for causes of rejoicing. Years ago I have felt tempted to write to you in order to express my gratitude for the help your words have been to me in my labours here.

I fully appreciate the importance of our conference being received by a headmaster, and not only do I rejoice on personal and educational grounds, but for the sake of our loving president, Miss Buss, who with other older members bore the burden of opposition in days that now, happily, belong to the past.

His answer to another letter which he received at this time may be appropriately inserted here.

Mrs. Charles Kingsley had long been deeply interested in his work at Uppingham, as he had been in the work of her distinguished husband. In 1886 he

had visited Mrs. Kingsley at Leamington. At that time he writes :—

I was greatly touched and interested by my conversation with Mrs. Kingsley. It quite seemed to me a continuation of my talk with Mrs. Ewing on her deathbed, though Mrs. Kingsley is not dying. She is seventy-three and an invalid. The spirit power of such communion is very wonderful, and a most exceeding great reward it is to have the experience of one's life made helpful to holy and gifted women.

Mrs. Kingsley had now written to him very warmly of the meeting of the conference of headmistresses and of his address.

To MRS. CHARLES KINGSLEY.

*June 13th, 1887.*

MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND—The tears came into my eyes as I read your earnest, glowing words about the work it has been given me to do. I feel to my inmost soul that it is given ; that both the eye to see and the lips to speak have been given. The revelation has been quite as great a revelation to me as it can be to any other. And the writing power comes at the time—a gift. I feel also how through long years of trial, and waiting, and pain, long years accompanied by many strange interpositions of external circumstance, the heart and eye have been trained and cleansed for sight, not least by my curious intercourse with Mrs. Ewing, whom I was only permitted to see and actually speak to when dying, on her bed of death, as it proved within a fortnight. Her influence, the influence of a woman, and the purity and goodness of my own wife, have been great teachers. And God has given it to me to speak. I do feel very solemnly what a happy burden is laid upon me. "The Revelation of the Bride" once seen, even a glimpse caught of its pure glory, and practical meaning, can never be forgotten ; but men are too low, too sensual, as yet, to receive it ; but woman will listen and believe it. I feel sure that the fate of the world is

in the hands of the women. Eve brought power worship and knowledge idolatry in ; the Blessed Virgin, Mary, and her true daughters, the noble wives especially, are to cast it down from its throne again. The lady teachers have taken the MSS. to publish. I will write at once to have it done well, and order twenty copies to be sent to you immediately it is out. It is my intention to publish the seven addresses I have delivered now in one volume as soon as I can get a publisher. Pray accept my most grateful thanks for your letter, which is of more value to me than any I ever received. I myself believe that last week was a great epoch and landmark in the world history of spirit life. You make me believe it too.

A note from a Swiss friend in reference to the conference is thus referred to, and the quotation may fitly close the consideration of his relation to women's work.

*June 28th.*—A letter from Miss Heutschy saying how much she has been helped by my addresses. It is very cheering to find how many struggling workers get help from the pain I have suffered. I cannot help being struck too, especially in connection with my Queen, at how many women have been cheered and had their toil brightened by my help. Thank God for this ! I do trust He has given me power to head a revolt against power worship and force, and to help the weak. May I ever be a protector of women and children and the weak. And do Thou, O God, protect me in my weakness.

But the spirit which could think so clearly and speak so strongly for the cheer of others was, in these days, being undermined and unnerved by petty material cares. At a meeting of the trustees of the school held in London, and which he attended, it was decided that his petition in regard to an increase of salary up to the limit allowed by law could not be admitted, apparently on the ground that money was required for new class-rooms.

His speech at the break-up was remarked as being

of singular power. It was the year of the Queen's Jubilee—the influence of the British Empire throughout the world was much in men's thoughts—the many threads of living interest with which he himself and his school had become linked with distant lands stirred his imagination. So after the usual announcement of prizes and school honours he pointed out to his boys how the life of a great English public school goes forth year by year to all the many lands of the Empire ; and how essential it was that this life should be high and true and pure. The glorious national inheritance which they enjoyed was every hour widening ; they were like a city set on a hill. Woe to them who touched this inheritance with the hand of evil, and woe to them who betrayed. Woe to all meanness of thought or aim ; woe to all who forgot the high duties which must ever be joined to the exercise of world-wide power and influence.

The few rough notes in which he had outlined what he wished to say, and which were all that he made use of in his school addresses, remain to indicate this current of his thought.

On the evening of the break-up day he writes :—

*July 27th.*—There is something almost awful in the sudden cessation of the fierce pulsation of life and work at the end of term. It is hard to believe that it is all over. Yesterday I worked for twelve consecutive hours, barring scraps of meal-times. To-night all is over, and quiet and stillness reigns. It is very wonderful. This morning I felt so ill that I feared that I should break down. But I got through. I am reported to have made the best speech I ever made, and indeed I think I did, for I had much to say, and God gave me the power to say it. . . .

*July 28th.*—Very shaky, but getting better. It is the severest term for the ceaseless roll of good and evil that I

have ever been through in my life, and I am quite awestruck at the sudden stillness.

. . . Altogether I feel greatly cheered in spite of trustees, etc. The living things seem to have so much life.

Shortly before the break-up he had preached his last sermon for the term. The text was, "And now cometh the end."

The summer holiday was spent in Scotland, where he had taken a house, "Ladyhill," near Birnam. Through the letters written during the first weeks of his rest there runs a vein of sadness and discouragement.

"It certainly is very strange," he says in a note, "but how true, that the moment a man steadily pursues any truth, especially a new truth, he must to the very last be met by opposition. There is a still stranger truth also, of which our blessed Lord was the great example when He was put to death by the Jews as destroying their religion, and by the Romans as a rebel, that, as events unwind, every consistent worker on principle finds himself put in the position of opposing what he has always worked for, and his opponents posing as the workers. It is a strange turn of the wheel which puts the trustees in the position of the liberal upholders of school interests, and me as an obstructive greedy for money."

The quiet holiday, however, did him good, and before it was over he seemed full of the old fire and energy.

But the long day's toil was drawing to a close. "Work till the end of life, and life till the end of work." Surely his prayer had been more than fulfilled.

His last term opened on the 22nd of September. He was full of school interests. The appointment of a new master—the reception of new boys—visits from old ones—messages from fellow-workers in many parts of the world occupied his thought.

New demands for public work kept coming in on all sides. "Next Sunday," he says, "I am to preach at Worcester Cathedral at Gott's<sup>1</sup> request, and to give away the school prizes on Monday. . . . I have been writing a bit in the holidays, and in consequence have undertaken to prepare a paper for the Industrial Education Association of New York, which last term I declined to do. . . ."

*September 26th.*—Hard at work again, yet how happy I should be in the work if I could shake off — and the money nightmare. But as it is, there are many glorious gains and solaces. My new class to-day for the first time; the nicest class by far that I have had for some years. . . .

*October 4th.*—Went to Worcester with G— on Saturday, and came back to-day. . . . Preached in the cathedral on Sunday night, the dean said to 2000 people. Certainly the congregations in the cathedral morning and evening were wonderful. The next day took part in the opening of their schoolroom, and was appointed to make the speech of the day. The next morning went to the High School for Girls, and Miss Ottley asked me to speak to them, which I did. Nothing could have gone better. I was wonderfully struck by the contrast of that grand possibility of religious peace, with the cathedral in its glory, the ancient associations, and the absence of fierce work, with the life here. It was a new world, partly known before, but never felt so much as in the visit in term time.

*October 8th.*—Heard from Fisher Unwin that he will publish my Addresses, giving me a royalty. I wrote to D— about the cricket song. To my great delight he has put it in print at once, and means to publish it in a small volume, with all the songs of a general character. I am greatly pleased with this.

*October 11th.*—Delighted at getting to-day a cheque of £35 school payment from Haslam on account of the auto-types I got for the school some ten years ago. I never

<sup>1</sup> The Dean of Worcester.

expected to see the money except in driplets, and not much expectation of that. It has come like a present. If I could only have the money that has leaked away in setting the school going efficiently in this way, I shouldn't be badly off. But God knows, and it is no mean thing to be able to spend without its being known or thanked for, in an ungrudging spirit, and He has given me that power ; money's worth, I am inclined to think.

*October 12th.*—I got a letter to-day from the New York Industrial Education Association, very much pleased that I will write them an article, and hoping that I will not make it less than 12,000 or 15,000 words. This is very cheering, and it gives me full space to do my best. I pray God to inspire me and bless it. I have much ready. Then my composition paper came back typed, and I am rejoiced to find that I have practically another lecture ready. . . . Then for the first time in my life my mind is quite at ease in money matters, partly because my expenses are now within control and within my income, partly from a much stronger faith, and a feeling of daily help, and messages from God. My health, too, is better. I took a really good walk to-day, and my strength is improving.

A master's wife remembers her last talk with him at about this time. She had been speaking of the greatness of the work which he had done at Uppingham. "I do not think much of the work I have done," was his answer ; "but I should be glad if, when I am gone, some one in the other world should touch me on the shoulder and say, 'Mr. Thring, I have been a better man for having known you.' "

On Friday, the 14th, he took tea with a dear friend, the wife of one of the masters. Some ladies were present, and he was full of life and spirit, joining heartily in the merry conversation of the party. When the other visitors had gone his talk took a graver turn, and his last words to his hostess, as he left her door,

were: "Believe me, a life lived in earnest does not die; it goes on for ever."

On Saturday he had much to do. It was the last working day of a working life. "My article for New York is getting into shape. I hope to finish the first draft of it next week." His Sunday sermon, too, was being written. Care was not wanting, for the refusal of his trustees to grant him at the close of his long life of toil the full salary allowed by law had wounded him deeply. But he was full of happiness too. "It is astonishing to me how God at this crisis has so filled me with peace and many cheering messages, and interests of life. . . . The money question, I feel sure, will be brought right in the end. A most cheering letter from an assistant schoolmistress about the address."

In the evening he read as usual the Psalms and Evening Prayers in the schoolhouse. Those who heard him recalled afterwards, with something akin to awe, the last sentence of his household reading in those Psalms which he loved so well, and which had ever been the channel of expression for his deepest feeling: "So he fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power."

They knew it not, nor he, but assuredly it was his own epitaph that he read.

"And now to bed; sermon finished, and a blessed feeling of Sunday coming."

Such are the closing words of the last entry made on that last Saturday night in the diary to which he had confided his inmost thoughts for nearly thirty years.

The Sunday came, but it was to be his last on earth —the last on which he was to appear in the chapel

which he had built, or in the school of which he had been for so long the central figure,—the moving and inspiring spirit.

He was not well when he got up, but went to the morning service in chapel. It was observed that he did not kneel during the Litany, and his chaplain, seeing this, watched him, but he rose as usual and went to the altar to read the Communion Service.

He had read the Lord's Prayer and the first Collect of the Service, when, laying his book down on the altar, he signed to the chaplain, Mr. Christian, to continue the service for him. He was evidently in great pain, but very calmly, refusing with a gesture the assistance of those who, seeing his sudden seizure, had stepped forward to offer it, he walked with a firm step down the aisle between the long rows of his kneeling boys, by whom he was never again to be seen alive.

From the very altar, and from "the very act of administering Christ's soldiers' oath to his schoolboy sons," the veteran warrior of Christ passed to his death-bed, resolute and unflinching to the last.

There followed a few days of wrestle for the life which was still strong in him. Danger was not at first anticipated ; for a little it seemed as if his strong constitution might triumph over the inflammation which had been the result of a sudden chill ; but a fevered and anxious mind added its weight to the fever of his body ; on Friday it was known that his case was hopeless ; on Saturday morning, 22nd October, he breathed his last.

Amid a great concourse of old boys and others who had come together to do honour to his memory, and to join in the mourning of the school, his body was, on the following Thursday, laid to rest in the ancient church-

yard of the parish. The day before it had been transferred from the schoolhouse to the school chapel. There it rested before the altar, surrounded by hundreds of wreaths sent from all parts of the country, and there his boys and colleagues paid their last tribute of respect and reverence to him who had made their school great, and had for more than thirty years ruled it with a strong hand and loving heart.

A monument, fittingly simple and massive, marks the spot where the body of the tired worker lies.

A noble statue, by Brock, adorns the school chapel, and recalls to new generations of Uppingham boys the strong lineaments and masterful figure of their second founder—of one who was both a king of boys and a leader of men.

A brass tablet on the chapel walls has the following inscription :—

In grateful remembrance of Edward Thring, whose writings animated the art, and whose life enriched the work of teaching, a few English and American teachers erected this tablet.

'HONOUR THE WORK, AND THE WORK WILL HONOUR  
YOU.'

## CHAPTER XVII

### PERSONAL AND OTHER RECOLLECTIONS

I FIRST met Thring at the Headmasters' Conference at Winchester in 1873. I was introduced to him by Dr. Ridding, then Headmaster of Winchester, and Chairman of the Conference. As Thring came down the hall of the college, Dr. Ridding prefaced his introduction with the remark : "Here is the man who can tell you more about education than any one else in England." The observation was made, I believe, in all sincerity, and I think also in all truth. It illustrates the impression he had made on some of the most clear-minded men among his professional contemporaries. Those who had to govern large schools could perhaps best judge what it was to both found and govern one.

"The work at Uppingham is really unique in our generation. . . . I doubt if there was another man in England who could have done it." Thus wrote the late Dr. Scott, long Headmaster of Westminster School, and Thring's contemporary at Eton and Cambridge.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For personal recollections of Thring, and for a study of his work and character based on intimate acquaintance as a pupil and colleague, the reader may be referred to the interesting volume published soon after his

Among the assembled headmasters at Winchester one noted a certain deference paid to Thring which could not be accounted for entirely by the fact that he was the founder of the conference. It seemed a homage paid to the intensity of his moral earnestness. In the gathering were men reckoned among the first in England in the power of fluent and graceful speech. His speech was not graceful ; only on rare occasions was he fluent ; yet what he said in angular phrase, and often awkward sentences, had in it a singleness of purpose and an originality of character which even among distinguished men gave his thought a stamp of special distinction and separateness. Something of this effect was perhaps due to the concentrated energy with which he threw himself into the subject before him, whether it were great or small. "Nothing seemed small to him" was a reminiscence of his early curate days which has already been quoted. The characteristic clung to him through life and became the subject of other reminiscences. One of these is worth reproducing from the accurate illustration which it gives of his character and mental habit.

An archbishop was asked, "What kind of man is Edward Thring?" The archbishop was about to poke the fire, he paused, and holding out the poker, said, "Why, he was this kind of a man ; if he were poking a fire, he would make you believe that the one thing worth living for was to know how to poke a fire properly."

death by the Warden of Glenalmond (*A Memory of Edward Thring*, by John Huntley Skrine. Macmillan and Co.). From this volume I have made a few quotations. A slighter study is that by Rev. Canon H. D. Rawnsley (*Edward Thring, Teacher and Poet*. T. Fisher Unwin). Both of these volumes furnish striking illustration of the profound impression which Thring made upon those who worked under and with him.

The emphasis which he laid upon minor questions often gave his expressions in speech or writing the appearance of exaggeration. In the mouth of others this might be true; in his they simply reflected the attitude of his mind. The thing immediately before him was all-important. The action of the moment meant everything. The most insignificant person was of the utmost consequence. In dealing with the simplest everyday questions his constant habit was to refer them back to great principles. This attitude of mind was perhaps his most distinguishing characteristic; it was the keynote of the separateness of character which all who came in contact with him felt and acknowledged.

Preaching before the school on the first anniversary of his death, and while yet his memory was a vivid recollection in the minds of all, one of his fellow-workers could say:—

I do not believe he would have neglected a school lesson for the chance of becoming an archbishop. I do not believe he would have omitted one portion of the day's routine, if that omission had injured a single boy, for the position of the highest eminence his country could bestow. . . . He was one to whom the most insignificant unattractive boy was as precious as the most brilliant, who regarded the most troublesome characters as God's stray sheep to be brought back into the fold of God's grace.

“He ennobled the smallest detail of school life,” was a remark made by one of his masters to others at the time of his death.

In a note written soon after Thring's death, Mr. Birley, who for so many years was trustee of the school, says:—

I do not think that there was another man in the world

who joined in such a degree the iron will which makes a great headmaster with the tender sympathy which reached the heart of the smallest boy.

Such was the tribute of those who saw him close at hand, and had worked with him year after year.

Though essentially a schoolmaster and accustomed to consider life from a schoolmaster's point of view, the impression which his thought and character left upon men of affairs was often very striking. An Anglo-Indian of distinction once said to me that while he had lived on terms of intimacy with most of the men who have filled a large place in modern Indian history—John Lawrence, Henry Lawrence, Havelock, Outram, and others, he had never felt with any of them so strongly as he had always felt with Thring, that he was in the presence of a great man.

An old Uppingham boy has sent me the following extract from a letter written to him by his mother on hearing of Thring's death :—

I always felt in talking to him that he spoke with a sort of noble heavenly instinct, scorning all this world's axioms and accepted rules, seizing on the good and pure and true with a passionate love that kindled an answering glow even in the dullest and most apathetic soul. But I believe a nature like his suffers far more than others, and now that is over, and the joy begun.

A fellow-teacher writes of him :—

To talk to the man or to correspond with him was like breathing Alpine air. He was a splendid fellow. If a man had any little spark whatsoever in him, Thring could blow it into a blaze. I never had such genuine hearty sympathy from any man as I had from him.

A father who had seven boys with him at various periods writes :—

I think the essential character of Thring was that with all his firmness of opinion and principles in everything he undertook in connection with the school he still had a boy's heart within, and thus was admirably fitted to be a leader as well as master of schoolboys. And I think his great love of truth and manly conduct influenced the whole school, and that most Uppingham boys have turned out honourable, sensible, working men in this generation.

No doubt his own nature often made him chafe unnecessarily under the restraints and hindrances to which he was subjected.

"I think," he says, "Freeman's derivation of our name from the Dog-and-Hawk Vassal must be true, for I always feel something of the wild man in me—a passion for liberty, and a detestation of needless barriers. I have often thought it curious that it should have pleased God to deny the two great earthly longings of my heart, which were earthly—free space of room, and a little plot of ground and home of my own. But I can easily see how good it is that it has been so."

But with all his vehement impatience under restriction in any form, and his sensitiveness to indifference and opposition, he was a man in whom the wells of happiness were deep and full. His diary and correspondence scarcely do justice to the brighter side of his life. He notes this himself:—

I am often struck in writing this diary with its likeness to common history, how one puts down all the vexations and none of the good or but little. How can one tell the quiet hours of faith and hope, the encouragement that comes into the heart, the feeling of work done, and the deep conviction low down under all the storms that God blesses the life here and will bless it; that He has done a great work, and will make it go out into all lands—yes, is making it do so, even though it perish here, or perish in England, or be quite unknown as having come from hence? All this cannot be put down on paper; all the weariness and vexation can to some

extent. Still less that strange compound be expressed by which one long continuous surface stream of care and disappointment and vexation coexists and goes on at the same time with the strong undercurrent of determination and quiet confidence and spirit consolation.

For nine of his hardest working years—from 1867 to 1876—Thring spent his summer holidays at Grasmere, where he leased a house known as Ben Place. His enjoyment of the Lake country almost amounted to a passion, and his love for it found expression in a collection of verse published under the name of *Dreamland*.

At Grasmere many of his happiest days were spent and much of his best work was done. Here a succession of friends and Old Boys came every summer to visit him, and in the free intercourse of holiday life, when he threw off his burden of cares and became a boy again, they learned to understand better than in any other way the happy and joyous side of his nature.

His diary was only kept during term time, and so gave little record of these bright and happy interludes in his life.

After the Borth period he went for several years to the Welsh coast for his holiday, and found infinite delight in renewing his association with the place and its friendly people.

A letter written to me during one of these visits shows how readily his spirits responded to holiday influences.

#### To G. R. PARKIN.

You must manage whenever you come to be able to spend some of the holidays with us. I should like to see you at Uppingham again, but if we live, a bit of holiday life at Borth

is an absolute necessity. We do not live elsewhere. We toil and moil and breathe and gather in, but here we live free life and full of pleasant schemes. . . .

I have just written another sonnet which I send you, suggested by the merry party of young people and our joyance here.

And age is winter? I am growing old,  
Grey hairs have long since straggled into place,  
And feet, once winged jests, that laughed to race,  
Plod slow and halting like a tale ill told.  
What though the frost upon the roof lay hold,  
'Tis a poor house whose battered frame the wind  
Can whistle through at will and roomage find,  
Whose bankrupt tenant all his goods hath sold.  
But warm and bright old Christmas sits at home,  
Keeps mirthful house with noise of dance and jest,  
Or silence sweeter still, when feet that roam  
Meet round his hearth and gather of his rest.  
Let thriftless summer lightly come and go,  
Old age hath steadier fires at his command that glow.

There, you see I may be cowardly, but I am not down-hearted. . . . I have been greatly interested and pleased at the success of the Australian cricketers. Mark me, cricket is the greatest bond of the English-speaking race, and is no mere game. This Australian visit has unconsciously done much in this way towards a feeling of brotherhood and common life. . . .

At a later period he spent summer holidays in Cornwall and Scotland, but they never quite took the place of the Lake district, for which he had an abiding affection, and over which he delighted to guide his friends. Very memorable to me is a week I spent with him at Grasmere in 1874. He had just been set free from his work; under the influence of the mountain air and mountain scenery, the tangled and complicated problems of school life at Uppingham ceased to worry and he lived for the time in his ideal world of educational truth. His interest in everything belonging to education seemed like a perennial stream. As we climbed the hills or drove around the valleys of that

picturesque country, he was always ready to spend hours in eager conversation on every question touching upon school life. I doubt if any one ever saw Thring at his best who had not met him when thus free from the harassing routine of daily work, and when his thought and imagination were stimulated by contact with nature in its more noble and beautiful forms.

With living nature his sympathy was strangely intimate and inspiring. In the country walks which he shared with friends, and which made no small part of his happiness, the universal push of life in spring, the wealth and superfluity of vegetable and animal life in summer seemed to lift him out of himself, and quicken every power of thought. His conversation then became full of illustrations drawn from nature.

He was interested in every wayside flower, every bird's note, every striking bit of scenery, every shifting cloud which changed the appearance of the sky.

He had the habit of powerful iteration common to many men upon whom fundamental truth has made a profound impression. Those who listened much to his speeches, sermons, or conversation, became accustomed to look for well-worn phrases and forms of expression into which he had condensed his thought.

"Life" was the word that was most frequently on his lips, and always in his heart. To teach his boys to live a "true life" was his dream and the crown of his ambition. It was remarked that he never preached a sermon without bringing in some reference to "life" or "true life," and in most of his sermons there are many such references. But it was truly said by one who knew him intimately that in the man himself there was ten times as much life as in all his sermons put together. It flowed out on all around him. No visitor to Upping-

ham, or only a very shallow one, ever mistook for self-conceit or vanity the intense earnestness with which he threw himself into the elucidation of educational problems, illustrating his views from his own work and experience. One never thought of his being a master of his subject—his subject possessed him and carried him out of himself.

Some recollections furnished by his friend, Bishop Mitchison, may properly find a place here.

My first acquaintance with Edward Thring, and what came of it, is illustrative of the generous and loyal character of the man. It began many years ago, somewhere about the year 1860, or a little later. I was then a very young headmaster, with a miserable tumbledown set of domestic buildings belonging to my school. I was just beginning to rouse my governors, the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, to a sense of their duty in the matter of new buildings, and I was now anxious to inform my own mind as to plans of buildings, class-room, dormitories, and the like. I had been invited over by Dean Sanders to preach for him in the cathedral at Peterborough, and to him I broached the question, adding that I had heard much of Mr. Thring's success at Uppingham, and was disposed to go over and ask to see his buildings and arrangements. The Dean encouraged me to do so, adding, "You will find Thring the best of fellows, and most willing to help you to the utmost of his power." I went, and found it even as he had said. I walked over from Manton, presented myself at the schoolhouse, and stated my errand. I was at once welcomed, and taken over one or two houses, and shown everything. As we went he expounded, prophet-wise, the principles he kept in view, which, I confess, I only imperfectly comprehended in the very abstract and somewhat paradoxical form in which he stated them, and was disposed to say in my heart, "Doth he not speak parables?" But this did not interfere with my full appreciation of the cordial, sympathetic manner in which he welcomed me as a brother of the craft, and did his best to send me away greatly helped in the object I had in view, and

encouraged to pursue it. I was able to profit largely by what I saw in Uppingham in the planning and arrangement of my new buildings at Canterbury, and I prevailed on my friend to come over to the opening festivities, at which, in a speech, I expressed my great obligation to Mr. Thring for the hints I had got from him as to construction and arrangement. It was the very least I could do, but Thring never forgot it, and often reminded me that I had been one of the few honest men of his acquaintance who had publicly and unreservedly acknowledged the extent to which I had picked his brains. My imitation was not a servile copy; I modified at my own discretion; and when Thring's first edition of *Education and School* came out, I being then an occasional contributor to the *Contemporary Review*, undertook a review of his book. While I praised it generally, as it deserved, I did not scruple to criticise details freely. The article was anonymous, so I thought it right to confess authorship to my friend. Next time we met he affected indignation. "You praised me," he said, "at the expense of my system."

After this he came over to Canterbury one year to preach our anniversary sermon in the cathedral. The school was growing, thanks, among other things, to the new buildings which my dean and chapter had with great liberality erected and furnished according to my desires. At the end of that term our numbers stood at 120. Thring did not know this little detail; but, by a strange coincidence when he ascended the pulpit, he gave out for his text, Acts i. 15: "*The number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.*" His sermon turned on the inherent power of growth in Christianity, because it was an embodiment of truth, and he argued from analogy to the power of growth in a good school founded on true principles. Much of his discourse got lost among the bewildering echoes of Canterbury Cathedral, but at the end of each point sounded forth in tone and manner so familiar to those who often heard him speak, "And was not this, think you, a mighty power?"

I am indebted to H. Courthope Bowen, Esq., for the following sketch:—

I had known Mr. Thring by reputation and in his books for some time before the opening of the ill-fated Finsbury Training College in 1882 brought me first into correspondence, and then into personal contact with him. I have sent you all of his side of the correspondence that I can find. Even to one who knows nothing of the forlorn attempt these letters are even now striking enough. Guess what they were to me in the thick of the struggle, alternately hoping and hopeless. What a ready and ever-generous sympathy he had! How earnest and enthusiastic he was! He made me feel, as well as know, that even to fail in the endeavour to make a better education possible had a touch of worthiness, of true service in it; and education, as you remember, he ever held to be one of the noblest of services. Old Latimer, I think, must have been some such a man as he—intensely in earnest, because intensely convinced, and with the same picturesque metaphoric way of speaking and writing. And no one was ever more intensely convinced than Thring that the honest educator was doing God's work—directly, not indirectly—work from which God's eyes were never moved away. This was no form of speech with him, but a veritable fact. Most of this one can perceive from his books or his letters. One says at once, here is a spiritual brother of Carlyle and Ruskin. But for one who felt somewhat as he felt about education to meet Thring, and to talk with him, was an experience never to be forgotten. Violent emotion, we know, is apt to become hysterical—is liable to result in weakness, intellectual as well as physical. Thring was pre-eminently an emotional man. But his emotion was not violent—it was deep, it was intense, every fibre of his being seemed to vibrate with it; it moved in his eyes, it trembled in his voice, it set him pacing up and down. Yet it did not result in weakness, but in activity or strong desire for activity. It seemed rather a spur than a hindrance to his intellect, except that it made his mind work as it were by flashes, without sustained sequence, and utter itself in striking metaphors, which, though oftenest brilliant, were at times too hurriedly caught at, and rather hurt than helped the effect of his words. But whether his fashion of speech was mainly happy or not, it made and left an impression on one unlike anything else. Right or wrong, hasty,

fantastic, or keen-sighted, he made one feel that he was veritably in earnest ; that he was not speaking of a mere hobby or as a specialist, but was telling you of what to him were vital truths, and as the feeling grew one saw him to be a "mission'd spirit," not indeed of those "who stand and wait," but rather one of those "who at His bidding speed," who would rather try and fail than stand and wait.

All his life Thring was a poor man. After thirty-three years of strenuous work, and what was considered a successful career at Uppingham, he left behind him only the patrimony, secured on the family estate, which he had inherited as a younger son, and the insurance with which in early days he had protected his life for the creditors who lent him money to carry out his plans. All his own earnings and the very considerable legacies which were from time to time left him were swallowed up in the making of Uppingham.

For some time his income from the school was small. After he had been headmaster for several years he writes to a brother that, as the result of the strictest economy, he has, exclusive of house expenses, £750 a year for the payment of debts. With the growth of the school his position gradually improved, and during the later years of his headmastership his income amounted to more than £3000 per annum. This may be considered as fairly large, though small when compared with the income of several other headmasters of great schools in England.

But Thring, as the son of a country gentleman, had been brought up in an affluent way. While himself most simple in his personal tastes, he never, I think, understood rigid economy in the use of money. Not merely the habits of his early life, but the necessities of his position as head of a great and growing school,

made his expenses great. Besides, where he had an object to accomplish, when he had sympathy to express, when his enthusiasm had been aroused, the want of money and considerations about the future were seldom allowed to stand in his way. To encourage men to build in the early days of the school he was accustomed to make reductions from his capitation fees. He contributed largely from his own means to all the plans for the improvement of the school. He met the generosity of others with a spirit as large as theirs. It has been mentioned that Mr. Witts, on taking a mastership in the school, subscribed £1000 to the fund for the building of the chapel. I have found the following note written to Mr. Witts immediately after the offer was made :—

I have thought since you left me that if you have any misgivings about the £1000 for the chapel, and rather repent my having taken you at your word at once, which perhaps I ought not to have done, that if as you go on you find it press you, the matter might be smoothed by my remitting the taxation of the last ten boys of your house till the last £500 was made up in this way; I would gladly do so if you find it advisable.

When the migration to Borth was decided upon, the masters themselves had to provide the necessary funds. In an official report to the trustees, Thring stated that he advanced or assumed personal liability for more than £3000, and it was long before he was quite released from this burden.

His papers disclose numberless illustrations of the too liberal way in which he gave to every cause which appealed to his sympathy. To missionary efforts in many parts of the world he was constantly contributing both from sympathy with the cause and to maintain

the name and fame of Uppingham as a missionary school. A series of letters written at intervals to a friend who was struggling with a difficult educational experiment is marked by a tone of lofty encouragement, but not less by the fact that nearly every letter contained a remittance for the support of what he thought a good cause.

In writing to him I once casually mentioned that had I the means to do so I would like to work out a certain educational idea in Canada. "Put me down for £50 to carry out that plan," was his prompt response, quite unasked for and unthought of. A cheque for £30 goes in a letter which apologises for the smallness of the contribution, and promises more, to a memorial to Mrs. Ewing.

But these are only isolated instances of what was the habit of his life. Imprudence it will be deemed by some; by others a noble unworldliness.

Although overwhelmed by debt through the greater part of his life he yet steadily and unflinchingly resisted the temptation to make money at the sacrifice of his school principles. How great that temptation was, and what a strain was involved in resistance, the readers of his diary will have learned. When his father, long sceptical about his work, but struck at last by the success which was crowning his efforts, offered to ease his burden, he declines the aid unless given as to a work done for God, and not because of its worldly success. This was at a time, too, when the burden of debt lay most heavily upon him.

Amid the beautiful and noble school buildings erected at Uppingham, upon some of which he had spent so much of his thought and means, it was found when he died that the headmaster's house—the one in

which his own comfort and convenience were most concerned—was the one building in the place about which the least thought had been taken.

Thrинг never received any public recognition such as has been over and over again given in England to men connected with public school life who have not accomplished a tithe of what he did for education.

In 1884 various journals had put his name forward as the man who could best fill the post of Provost of Eton, which had lately become vacant. The suggestion had for him no attraction. His diary says :—

*May 18th.*—There came by post from —— the paragraph from the *World* in which, after speaking of persons fitted for the Provostship of Eton, and mentioning my name amongst them, it says that my appointment “would be welcomed with acclamation as the too long deferred reward of a most distinguished career.” I have sent it down for mother to hear. She will like it . . . It is the last thing I should select . . . In the meantime I look on it as one of God’s “stepping-stones” which take one across a difficult stream. It shows me that I am not forgotten, and that whatever is good will be given me. I am so thankful for the help. Then I do so rejoice for the children’s sake. . . . It will give them faith to find that good comes out of the sacrifice—good which they can understand.

To W. F. RAWNSLEY.

*June 7th, 1884.*

Thanks for the provost news. As my name has been discussed it is interesting to me; though strange to say (considering my temperament of old) it has not ruffled even the serene surface of my soul.

The fact is, the paragraph in the *World* is worth to me a great deal more than the reality of its diction would be. There is no place in the world for which, in my own judgment,

I am more unfitted. My long practical experience of work is fatal in the kingdom of glamour. It would be an awful trial living in the midst of a splendour I cannot sympathise with, unable to touch it, yet supposed to be in power, and all the time with the keenest feelings on the subject. Moreover, I am poor, and the provostship is a white elephant; £200 a year where £4000 say must be spent to do the thing according to custom, is not a bed of roses or a reward. I cannot help laughing grimly when people talk of Government rewards, and thinking sometimes of Miss Waghorn left to die in the workhouse. . . . Hornby is just the man for the place, and they get a new headmaster.

During this year, however, he had a distinct impression that his work at Uppingham was drawing to a close. The precedents of English public school life certainly made it probable that preferment of some kind would be given him. He learned that a friend of some influence who had lately died, had on three occasions written to Mr. Gladstone to urge him to give public recognition to the work done at Uppingham. On this he remarks :—

How all this shows me the guiding hand ready at the right moment and in the right way to give or not to give. It all makes me feel more patient, less fearful, less troubled by the bank book. . . .

But other considerations came to influence his view of the question.

In 1886 a friend, with wide connections and a high position in public school life, wrote to ask him if he would permit his name to be placed before the Government of the day for such Church preferment as would justify him in giving up his arduous post at Uppingham. He writes in reply :—

*June 28th.*—Your letter is like your generous self. But I am obliged to go dead against it. For many years I have had

no party politics, but my whole soul was stirred to its depths by the Mid-Lothian campaign and the torrent of personal vituperation by which the present Government gained power. I felt degraded as an Englishman. I had rather starve (which I am not likely to do) than accept anything at the hands of Gladstone and his colleagues, much less ask it. . . . No, I never have felt the same utter contempt for English politicians that I do for the present Government. I do not wish to argue, but simply to state an elderly man's quiet, deliberate mind. Never fear for me. I am quite content. A man must stand and fall by his creed. And I am happy to stand or fall by mine. I counted the cost when I began my school career. I am quite satisfied. There is no harm in being poor. The right thing will come at the right time. I shall be able to square my accounts in a few years, and then I shall be master of the situation. A thousand thanks for your wonted generosity and interest. I do not forget it, though I do not accept it.

Only two or three months before his death the Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Magee, wrote to offer him an honorary canonry in his cathedral, as "a public recognition of valuable services rendered to the cause of education—in the fullest and highest sense of that term—in this Diocese." The emoluments of the office were *nil*—the only duty involved, that of preaching an annual sermon in the cathedral. This was the solitary offer of Church preferment which Edward Thring ever received.

He very rightly declined the well-meant proposal, feeling, as he explained in a letter to a friend, that he owed this to the dignity of the great school which he had created. In the early days of struggle and difficulty, recognition of this kind, he said, would have been useful and encouraging; now it could do no good to himself and would injure rather than assist the school.

When we consider how often work done in English public schools has led to the highest positions in the gift of the Church, the offer thus made to the greatest educational worker of his time verges upon the ludicrous.

But there is no need to question the adequacy or fitness of the reward which fell to Edward Thring's lot. The man for whom his country and its rulers found no public recognition holds a place higher than either could give in the grateful memory of thousands to whom his teaching has been a help and his example an inspiration.



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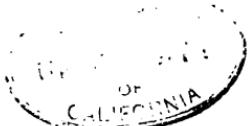
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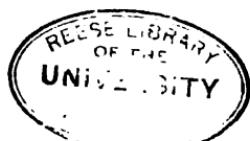
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